

T H E C U R T I S E X P E R I M E N T

by

KENNETH HENRY BRILL

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Commerce and Social Science
of the
University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Social Policy
and Social Work
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
England

July 1991

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

S Y N O P S I S

The thesis examines the experience of English local authorities under the arrangements recommended by the The Care of Children Committee, chaired by Dame Myra Curtis, Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. The committee was set up in 1946 by three government departments to enquire into existing methods of care for children who have from loss of parents or from any cause whatever been deprived of a normal home life with their own parents or relatives; and to consider what further measures should be taken to ensure that the children are brought up under circumstances best calculated to compensate them for the lack of parental care".

The committee recommended that the children in public care should come under one department in each authority with a children's officer as head and free of other duties. In paragraph 441 of their report they said, "this may indeed be said to be our solution to the problem referred to us".

The committee examined the existing statutory provisions and administrative arrangements and said how the children were cared for at the time.

Their extensive list of recommendations was broadly put into effect by the Children Act 1948, which remained in force until 1 April 1971 when social services for children were taken over by the social services committees under the Local Authority Social Services Act of 1970.

This thesis is dedicated to 'The Curtis Family'

Mr and Mrs Curtis
and their four boys

A summary of their story is set out in the appendix

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

An acknowledgement goes to all the children who came within the responsibilities of the [REDACTED] councils during my terms of office.

The next acknowledgement goes to the councillors, magistrates and colleagues in my own and other departments who shared with me many of the responsibilities.

I acknowledge the constant encouragement of Professor Emeritus M Rolf Olsen who accompanied me on the various paths which this treatise has followed over more than ten years and the support of June Bailey who typed and re-typed the work. To Dr Robert A Higham, Lecturer in Archaeology at Exeter University, who read the proofs and made constructive comments.

I thank the Rowntree Memorial Trust and its successive directors, Robin Guthrie and Richard Best, for help with meeting the costs.

To Sir William Utting, Chief Social Work Services Officer, who allowed access to the resources of the Department of Health and Social Security and the Archivist at the Public Record Office. Attention to every detail of my enquiries was given by Miss M 'Bernie' Carey.

To the Principal and Fellows of Newnham College, Cambridge, for permission to reproduce James Gunn's portrait of Dame Myra Curtis. To Amy Macadam who painted the picture entitled 'Approved School'. To Colin Peacock (Photographic) Limited, Bristol, for producing the plates.

To my wife, Jessica, whose whole retirement from the social work profession was spent supporting me in this study. To my son, Michael, another social worker, who led me through the anonymous facets of the computer. Neither lived to see the final work. To my daughter, Judi, who proof-read and typed the final drafts.

C O N T E N T S

Chapter		Page
	Index to Chapters	
	List of Illustrations	
	List of Tables	
	INTRODUCTION	1
1	CARE BEFORE AND AFTER CURTIS	9
2	CONFLICT ON THE WAY TO CHANGE	18
3	HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES TACKLED THE TASK	42
4	COLLECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE DATA	80
5	COMMITTEES	88
6	CHILDREN'S OFFICERS	105
7	ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE TO AND FROM CARE	125
8	FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN UPON RECEPTION TO CARE	172
9	LINKS WITH FAMILIES	192
10	LINKS WITH BROTHERS AND SISTERS	215
11	REVIEWING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS	226
12	MODES OF CARE	241
13	ADEQUACY OF PROVISION OF FIELD STAFF	271
14	SERVICE DEVELOPMENT : CHILDREN AT RISK	295
15	CURTIS FULFILLED?	344
16	APPENDIX: THE CURTIS FAMILY	372
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	378
	REFERENCES	412

I N D E X T O C H A P T E R S

INTRODUCTION

Page 001

THE CHILDREN'S OFFICER

THE CHILDREN ACT 1948

SOURCE MATERIAL

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL

CHAPTER 1 CARE BEFORE AND AFTER CURTIS

Page 9

- 1. 1 THE CURTIS EXPERIMENT
- 1. 2 CHILDREN'S COMMITTEES AS A PANACEA
- 1. 3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXPERIMENT
- 1. 4 THE SCOPE OF THE SERVICE
- 1. 5 CHILD CARE UNDER THE POOR LAW
- 1. 6 CHILDREN IN TROUBLE
- 1. 7 CHILDREN UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEES
- 1. 8 OTHER CHILDREN MAINTAINED AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS
- 1. 9 DEFINING THOSE FOR WHOM COMMITTEES
 WERE TO BE RESPONSIBLE

CHAPTER 2 CONFLICT ON THE WAY TO CHANGE

Page 18

- 2. 1 CAMPAIGN FOR THE BREAK UP OF THE POOR LAW
- 2. 2 LOCAL AUTHORITIES TAKE OVER
- 2. 3 APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGY TO MATERNAL DEPRIVATION
- 2. 4 FACETS OF THE APPLICATION OF CHILD PSYCHIATRY
 IN THE 1930s
- 2. 5 DISCREPANCY IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN
- 2. 6 MISS LEILA RENDEL
- 2. 7 EVACUATED CHILDREN
- 2. 8 PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE PLIGHT OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN
 DURING THE WAR
- 2. 9 WARTIME MORALS BASED ON THE CONCLPT OF 'ONE NATION'
- 2.10 DEMANDS FOR A WELFARE STATE AND OTHER SOCIAL CHANGES
- 2.11 GROWTH OF COLLECTIVISM
- 2.12 THE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE
- 2.13 THE SPATE OF PUBLICATIONS ON RECONSTRUCTION

2.14	CHANGES IN ISSUES BETWEEN THE WARS
2.15	THE CURTIS COMMITTEE ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
2.16	UNIFICATION ACHIEVED
2.17	TENSION BETWEEN MINISTRIES
2.18	THE INSECURE CHILD

CHAPTER 3	HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES TACKLED THE TASK	Page 42
------------------	---	----------------

3. 1	EARLY PREPARATIONS
3. 2	GENDER
3. 3	OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS
3. 4	QUALIFICATIONS
3. 5	GRADES OF PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICERS
3. 6	FIRST APPOINTMENTS AND DUAL APPOINTMENTS
3. 7	PLAYING THE FIELD
3. 8	A TIGHT TIMETABLE
3. 9	THE AUTHORITIES' RESPONSES
3.10	A NEW SERVICE ESTABLISHED
3.11	THE HOME SECRETARY'S CHOICE
3.12	SEPARATE DEPARTMENTS
3.13	EFFECTS OF FRAGMENTATION
3.14	WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A CHILDREN'S OFFICER
3.15	A FEW ANECDOTES TO SET THE SCENE
3.16	THE MOOD OF THE MOMENT
3.17	MUTUAL SUPPORT
3.18	THE FIRST GATHERING OF CHILDREN'S OFFICERS
3.19	OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS
3.20	PUBLISHED RECORDS OF THE BEGINNINGS IN THREE AUTHORITIES
3.21	KENT'S FIRST EXPERIENCES
3.22	GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S EARLY PERFORMANCE
3.23	DUDLEY : HIGH PRODUCTIVITY IN A VERY SMALL DEPARTMENT

CHAPTER 4	COLLECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE DATA	Page 80
------------------	--	----------------

4. 1	OBJECTIVES
4. 2	MEASURING PERFORMANCE
4. 3	SUBJECTIVITY

- 4. 4 EXISTING PRACTICES ACCEPTED
- 4. 5 SELECTION OF ELEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT
- 4. 6 THE ELEMENTS SELECTED FOR EVALUATION
- 4. 7 THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE

CHAPTER 5 COMMITTEES

Page 88

- 5. 1 INTRODUCTION
- 5. 2 EARLIER EXPERIENCE
- 5. 3 LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES : 1930 to 1948
- 5. 4 CHILDREN IN TROUBLE
- 5. 5 A PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE : 1935 to 1948
- 5. 6 WAR INTERVENES
- 5. 7 DETAILED COMMITTEE WORK IN THE LARGEST AUTHORITY
- 5. 8 VARYING VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF COMMITTEES
 IN STATUTORY SERVICES
- 5. 9 THE DUNNE REPORT
- 5.10 THE MONCKTON REPORT
- 5.11 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE
- 5.12 THE MAUDE INQUIRY and THE REDCLIFFE-MAUDE INQUIRY
- 5.13 LITTLE MAUDE'S DRASTIC SOLUTION
- 5.14 THE BARCLAY WORKING PARTY
 ON SOCIAL WORKERS' ROLE AND TASKS
- 5.15 THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
- 5.16 THE WIDDICOMBE COMMITTEE
 ON CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES
- 5.17 THE BLOM-COOPER INQUIRY
 INTO THE DEATH OF JASMINE BECKFORD
- 5.18 ROTATING OPINION
- 5.19 ELECTORAL CONTROL
- 5.20 PERFORMANCE OF COMMITTEES
- 5.21 SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION
 IN THE TWELVE LARGEST AUTHORITIES
- 5.22 SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION OVERALL
- 5.23 CONCLUSION

- 6. 1 INTRODUCTION
- 6. 2 OFFICERS BEFORE 1948
- 6. 3 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE'S SOLUTION
- 6. 4 SPECIFICATION FOR A CHILDREN'S OFFICER
- 6. 5 LACK OF A COHERENT PHILOSOPHY AND KNOWLEDGE BASE
- 6. 6 CHARACTERISTICS OF NORMAL HOMES
- 6. 7 IDEAL AND REALITY
- 6. 8 COMMUNICATING WITH DISRUPTED CHILDREN
- 6. 9 RECONCILING SIZE WITH EFFICIENCY
- 6.10 RIGIDITY OF APPROACH
- 6.11 SELECTION OF THE FIRST CHILDREN'S OFFICERS
- 6.12 THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES' SELECTIONS
- 6.13 GOOD AND BAD APPOINTMENTS
- 6.14 QUALIFICATION AND RANK AS A GUIDE TO SELECTION
- 6.15 ENTHUSIASM : AN ALMOST UNIVERSAL CHARACTERISTIC
- 6.16 WHAT THE HOME OFFICE THOUGHT
- 6.17 PROFESIONALLY TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS COMPARED
WITH OTHER FIRST-APPOINTED CHILDREN'S OFFICERS
- 6.18 GRADUATES COMPARED
WITH ALL OTHER FIRST-APPOINTED CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

- 7. 1 JUDGEMENT ON RECEPTION INTO CARE
- 7. 2 BEFORE 1948
- 7. 3 POOR LAW PRINCIPLES
- 7. 4 A CENTURY OF CHANGE
- 7. 5 CURTIS ON REMOVING CHILDREN FROM PARENTAL CARE
- 7. 6 DEPRIVATION CONTINUED
- 7. 7 ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE
- 7. 8 CONSUMPTION OF RESOURCES
- 7. 9 INSUFFICIENT CARE IN THE USE OF SOCIAL SERVICES' RESOURCES
- 7.10 INTERDEPENDENCE OF ECONOMY AND WELFARE
- 7.11 TWO DIFFERENT STRATEGIES
- 7.12 MEASURING THE CONSEQUENCES

7.13	CONFLICTING FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS ABOUT RECEPTION INTO CARE
7.14	HOME OFFICE CLASSIFICATION OF REASONS FOR RECEPTION INTO CARE
7.15	PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE UNMARRIED MOTHER AND HER CHILD IN 1953
7.16	FIRST EFFECTS OF THE 1948 REGIMES
7.17	A MANDATORY OBLIGATION
7.18	IDENTIFYING THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY
7.19	RECEPTION INTO CARE OF CHILDREN IN THE POSSESSION OF PERSONS OTHER THAN PARENTS
7.20	THE HOME OFFICE VIEW
7.21	THE USE OF VOLUNTARY RECEPTION UNDER SECTION 1 TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN
7.22	THE INSPECTORATE'S PREFERENCE FOR VOLUNTARY CARE
7.23	GROUNDINGS FOR INSPECTORS' ANXIETIES
7.24	AN EXAMPLE OF MISJUDGED RECEPTION INTO CARE
7.25	DEFINING THE AUTHORITY'S DUTY
7.26	DRAFTING CLAUSE 1 OF THE CHILDREN BILL 1948
7.27	TO 'RECEIVE' OR TO 'TAKE'
7.28	SECTION 1 AS A THREAT

CHAPTER 8	FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN ON RECEPTION TO CARE	Page 172
------------------	---	-----------------

8. 1	THE CURTIS COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS
8. 2	THE STATUTORY DUTY TO PROVIDE RECEPTION FACILITIES
8. 3	AN EARLY RECEPTION CENTRE
8. 4	A SAMPLE RECEPTION CENTRE REPORT
8. 5	THE MEMORANDUM OF GUIDANCE ON RECEPTION CENTRES
8. 6	THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES' RESPONSE TO THE MEMORANDUM
8. 7	MEASURING THE INCREASING USE OF RECEPTION HOMES
8. 8	'EMPTY BEDS'
8. 9	RECEPTION CENTRES AND REMAND HOMES
8.10	SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE OF TWELVE LARGE AUTHORITIES
8.11	CONCLUSION

- 9. 1 WHAT THE CURTIS COMMITTEE THOUGHT
- 9. 2 SECTION 1 OF THE CHILDREN ACT 1948
- 9. 3 ASSUMPTION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AND POWERS
- 9. 4 'FIT PERSON' ORDERS
- 9. 5 APPROVED SCHOOL ORDERS
- 9. 6 HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR 160/48
- 9. 7 THE TRADITION BEFORE 1948
- 9. 8 MAINTAINING PARENTAL CONTACTS START BEFORE ADMISSION
- 9. 9 THE RESCUE MOTIVE
- 9.10 EXAMPLE FROM THE SINGLE CASE STUDY
- 9.11 DIFFENTIATING PARENTAL LINKS FROM FRATERNAL LINKS
- 9.12 STARTING AT THE BEGINNING
- 9.13 CORRESPONDENCE WITH PARENTS
- 9.14 THE HOME OFFICE VIEW
- 9.15 ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTS
- 9.16 THE BOGEY OF THE REAPPEARING PARENT
- 9.17 PARENTS OF 'RESIDUAL EVACUEES'
- 9.18 EXAMPLES OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTS
- 9.19 EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTS
- 9.20 A VERY SPECIAL POINT OF VIEW
- 9.21 CONCLUSION

- 10. 1 FRATERNITY : A UNIVERSAL CONCEPT
- 10. 2 DIVERSITY OF RELATIONSHIPS
- 10. 3 THE ADMINISTRATIVE STEREOTYPE
- 10. 4 THE PRE-CURTIS INHERITANCE
- 10. 5 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST MIXING
- 10. 6 THREE SIMPLE CATEGORIES
- 10. 7 CONTRASTING EXAMPLES OF SEPARATION AND PROPINQUITY
- 10. 8 DEGREES OF SUCCESS
 - IN KEEPING BROTHERS AND SISTERS TOGETHER
- 10. 9 CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 11 REVIEWING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

Page 226

- 11. 1** THE ORIGIN OF REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S PROGRESS
- 11. 2** APPLICATION OF THE NEW PROCEDURES
 TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEES
- 11. 3** DEFINING THE DUTY TO REVIEW
- 11. 4** CIRCULAR 160/48 ON PLANNING FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
- 11. 5** PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF
 THE BOARDING OUT OF CHILDREN REGULATIONS 1955
- 11. 6** CHANGES IN 1955
- 11. 7** CONFUSION BETWEEN VISITORS' REPORTS AND REVIEWS
- 11. 8** HOW ONE AUTHORITY RESPONDED TO THE TWO REQUIREMENTS
- 11. 9** LESSONS FROM THE SINGLE CASE STUDY
- 11.10** ATTITUDES OF THE INSPECTORATE
- 11.11** A QUARTERLY REPORT ON A CHILD IN RESIDENTIAL CARE
- 11.12** STANDARD OR REVIEWS IN THE TWELVE LARGEST AUTHORITIES
- 11.13** CONCLUSION - AND CONFUSION

CHAPTER 12 MODES OF CARE

Page 241

- 12. 1** INTRODUCTION
- 12. 2** MODES OF PUBLIC CARE 1946
- 12. 3** BROAD CHANGES IN NUMBERS BETWEEN 1936 AND 1971
- 12. 4** THE CURTIS COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS
- 12. 5** WAS THERE A NEED FOR GROUP CARE?
- 12. 6** CURTIS' PRESCRIPTION FOR RESIDENTIAL GROUP CARE :
 THE 'FAMILY GROUP HOME'
- 12. 7** RESIDENTIAL NURSERIES
- 12. 8** GROUPED AND SCATTERED HOMES
- 12. 9** HOSTELS FOR EVACUEES
- 12.10** BOARDING SCHOOLS
- 12.11** APPROVED SCHOOLS
- 12.12** HOSTELS AND BOARDING SCHOOLS FOR MALADJUSTED CHILDREN
- 12.13** THE 'ADJUSTMENT HOME'
- 12.14** THE REQUIREMENT TO CHOOSE BOARDING OUT
- 12.15** SHORT STAY BOARDING OUT
- 12.16** LESSONS FROM THE SINGLE CASE STUDY
 OF THE CURTIS BROTHERS
- 12.17** RESTRICTIONS ON BOARDING OUT

12.18	CHANGING ATTITUDES AMONG FOSTER PARENTS
12.19	CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF 'RESIDENTIAL' WORK
12.20	PERFORMANCE OF THE AUTHORITIES IN BOARDING OUT
12.21	SUPPOSED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF MODE OF CARE
12.22	HOW THE LAW ON DENOMINATIONAL UPRBRINGING COULD AFFECT FOSTER CARE
12.23	A RADICAL ALTERNATIVE

CHAPTER 13 ADEQUACY OF PROVISION OF FIELD STAFF

Page 271

13. 1	INTRODUCTION
13. 2	THE LAW'S REQUIREMENT
13. 3	TROUBLE IN THE NORTH
13. 4	SOCIAL WORK PHILOSOPHY
13. 5	REPORT ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE 1963 ACT
13. 6	THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS ACT 1969
13. 7	THE HOME OFFICE ATTITUDE IN 1957
13. 8	A DIFFERENT STORY TEN YEARS LATER IN A DIFFERENT REGION
13. 9	DID EXPERIENCE BRING OFFICIAL ENLIGHTENMENT?
13.10	PERFORMANCE OF AUTHORITIES IN APPOINTING ADEQUATE NUMBERS OF CHILD CARE OFFICERS
13.11	NUMBER OF FIELD STAFF IN POST ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1969

CHAPTER 14 SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Page 295

14. 1	WHAT IS MEANT BY 'CASEWORK'?
14. 2	MODELS FOR CASEWORK IN CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENTS
14. 3	AN EARLY ATTEMPT TO APPLY CASEWORK PRINCIPLES TO CHILD CARE
14. 4	GENERICISM
14. 5	THE KEY WORKER, FUNDAMENTAL TO EFFECTIVE CASEWORK
14. 6	EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT QUALITIES OF CASEWORK
14. 7	A STARK CONTRAST FROM 1947
14. 8	A STEP FORWARD IN 1965
14. 9	THREE ASPECTS OF CASEWORK
14.10	CURTIS ON RECORDS
14.11	RECORDS REQUIRED BY THE 1948 ACT

14.12	RECORD KEEPING IN THE NEW DEPARTMENTS
14.13	PROCESS RECORDING
14.14	COMMUNICATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY
14.15	CASEWORK IN THE 'PREVENTIVE' FIELD
14.16	CALLS FOR MORE POWERS TO DIMINISH NEED FOR PUBLIC CARE
14.17	THE IMPACT OF SECTION 1 OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS ACT 1963
14.18	IMPLEMENTING SECTION 1
14.19	A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE TO THE 1963 ACT
14.20	THE FIRST NINE MONTHS' WORK UNDER SECTION 1
14.21	RECORDS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
14.22	RECORDS OF COMMITTED CHILDREN
14.23	SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF CASEWORK
14.24	CASEWORK WITH FAMILIES OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF HARM
14.25	CONSULTATION BEFORE COURT PROCEEDINGS
14.26	ATTITUDES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
14.27	'BATTERED BABIES'
14.28	SEXUAL ABUSE

CHAPTER 15 CURTIS FULFILLED?

Page 344

15. 1	THE QUESTION
15. 2	EARLY REACTIONS TO THE ACT
15. 3	THE GROWTH OF EXPERIMENT
15. 4	THE LEGAL BASIS
15. 5	IMPAIRED INHERITANCE
15. 6	LESSONS FROM THE CURTIS EXPERIMENT
15. 7	IN THE PUBLIC EYE
15. 8	SIZE, RELATED TO EFFECTIVENESS
15. 9	THE AFFECT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS
15.10	A TENTATIVE SOLUTION ; THE DISTRICT COUNCILS
15.11	THE EXAMPLE OF THE FIFTIES
15.12	METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS AS CRUCIBLES
15.13	INNER CITIES
15.14	THE CRUCIAL TASK OF MANAGEMENT
15.15	A FRESH START FOR SOCIAL WORK
15.16	IMPLEMENTATION

15.17	COMMITTEES
15.18	CHILDREN'S OFFICERS
15.19	ADMISSION TO CARE
15.20	MAINTAINING LINKS WITH FAMILIES
15.21	MAINTAINING LINKS BETWEEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS
15.22	REVIEW OF WELFARE AND PROGRESS
15.23	MODES OF CARE
15.24	PROVIDING SERVICE
15.25	PREVENTION
15.26	CHILDREN AT RISK
15.27	THE ANSWER

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER ONE	DAME MYRA CURTIS Chairman : The Care of Children Committee Principal : Newnham College, Cambridge	Page 8
CHAPTER TWO	DR DONALD WINNICOTT Consultant Psychiatrist	Page 40
	MRS CLARE WINNICOTT Lecturer in Child Care London School of Economics	Page 41
CHAPTER TWELVE	FAMILY GROUP HOMES Barnstaple 1898	Page 269
	FAMILY GROUP HOME Tiverton 1964	Page 270
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	SERVICE DEVELOPMENT CHART Children's Committees' Expenditure England and Wales 1949 to 1962	Page 342
	APPROVED SCHOOL Girls at Ryalls Court School 1960	Page 343

LIST OF TABLES

Paragraph

3. 1	Former Occupations and Qualifications of First-Appointed Children's Officers
3. 2. 1	Gender of First-Appointed Children's Officers
3. 2. 2	Gender of Last-Appointed Children's Officers
3. 2. 3	Gender of First-Appointed Children's Officers from Education Departments
3. 2. 4	Gender of First-Appointed Children's Officers from Social Work
3. 3	Previous Occupations of First-Appointed Children's Officers
3. 4	Qualifications of First-Appointed Children's Officers
3. 5	Grades of First-Appointed Children's Officers
4. 7. 1	Number of Children in Care per Thousand Child Population
4. 7. 2	Authorities' Scores According to Numbers in Care
5.23	Distribution of Children Among Five Grades of Committees
6.17	Comparison of Competence of First-Appointed Children's Officers with and without Professional Training Degree and Certificate
6.18	Competence of Graduate First-Appointed Children's Officers compared with Non-Graduates
7.12	Expenditure
8. 7	Numbers in Reception Centres
8.10	Twelve Largest Authorities' Reception Facilities
9.20	Performance of Authorities in Partnership with Parents
10. 8	Twelve Largest Authorities' Performance in Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together
11.12	Twelve Largest Authorities' Standard of Reviews
12. 2	Number of Children in Various Modes of Care : Curtis Committee's Estimates
12. 3	Number of Children in Various Modes of Care
12.20	Twelve Largest Authorities' Boarding Out Performance
13. 7	Proposed Saving by Closing One Home and Opening Another
13.10	Performance of Twelve Largest Authorities in Appointing Child Care Officers
13.11. 1	Number of Field Staff in Post : Counties
13.11. 2	Number of Field Staff in Post : County Boroughs
13.11. 3	Number of Field Staff in Post : London Boroughs
14. 7	Standards of Casework in the Twelve Largest Authorities
14.23	Persons Subject to Approved School Orders

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This thesis sets out and interprets the facts about The Curtis Experiment with the intention of promoting the future interests of disadvantaged children.

The Curtis Committee was set up, before the war ended, in response to a campaign led by Lady Allen of Hurtwood. Files in the Public Record Office show that before the second world war, Sir Sidney Harris had advocated consultation at least, if not co-operation, between those both locally and in Whitehall who were respectively responsible for children under the Poor Law and for children subject to court orders. One more group of children was looked after by a third department, the Ministry of Pensions, which was responsible for children whose parents were unable to look after them by reason of death or disability occasioned by war. Public aversion to the Poor Law prevented its machinery from being applied to children, including the thousands who had been evacuated to the countryside under threat of bombing or invasion and who had not returned to their families. The wish to treat these children separately was one motive for resisting moves towards integrating the various services for 'children deprived of normal home life'. This phrase, used in the terms of reference of the Curtis Committee, passes in its contracted form, 'deprived children' into social jargon, possibly discounting other forms of childhood deprivation.

THE CHILDREN'S OFFICER

The Curtis Committee found acute and dangerous confusion in the local authorities' share of management of the care of these children. The authority for child life protection might be a different one from that administering the Poor Law. This might lead to a position in which no one felt actively and personally responsible for the welfare of an individual child and in which (as the committee had heard in evidence) there might even be wrangling between committees as to which should bear the cost of his support. All children without a normal life should come under the care of a single *ad hoc* committee of the local authority for the area where they lived. This children's committee was to have its own executive officer with the standing of an important administrative official of the council, in direct touch with the responsible committee, not a member of the staff or any other head of department.

THE CHILDREN ACT 1948

Less than two years after publication of The Curtis Report, the Poor Law had been repealed and replaced by a series of statutes making separate provision for children and for the elderly and for disabled people, with another statute for hospitals. Following governmental prompting, several authorities set up children's committees and appointed children's officers months in advance of the legislation. This experiment, inspired by Curtis, was to continue for nearly twenty-three years until, in 1971, the local authority personal social services were again integrated into single departments in accordance with the Seebohm Committee's recommendations.

An independent observer might have detected, among the first children's committees and their officers, a continuing bias towards educational concepts.

especially among those who had been teachers or were educational administrators. The common law had considered 'upbringing' to be synonymous with 'education'. The years 1948-1971 saw a shift of emphasis away from the promotion of conforming behaviour and book-learning towards concern for feelings and relationships: away from material ambition and towards peace of mind as the paramount need of deprived children.

The military element was significant in determining models of management in the first children's departments. Writing now, in 1990, one looks back on nearly half a century in which Britain has not engaged in major warfare in Europe. By contrast, the Children Act came at the end of half a century of war. The Boer War was succeeded so quickly by those of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 that, by 1948 every adult seemed to have spent a lifetime in a community either engaged in warfare, recovering from a previous war, or preparing for the next one. Some volunteers for the Home Guard (Dad's Army) in 1939 wore medal ribbons, not only from the Great War but also from the South African Campaign. Britain was a supposedly victorious martial nation in 1948. A good proportion of the first children's officers and their staffs - women as well as men - had worn uniform in the armed forces, civil defence or quasi-military organisations supporting the military.

The children's officers and their staffs therefore took easily to disciplined structures and chains of command. This was reinforced by the local government ethos which held a chief officer responsible for everything which went on in his or her department. The armed services depended on 'leaders', local government on 'administrators' and only in the 1970s did the public services look for 'managers'. Heads of departments were often addressed as 'Sir', even by their

own deputies when on duty. It was the difficulty experienced by male chauvinists in keeping a straight face when addressing some of the young women children's officers as 'Ma'am' that encouraged the move away from formality which characterised children's departments and their successor departments of social services. This trend towards informality was more marked in some children's departments than in the traditional local government fields of engineering, finance, law, medicine and teaching.

SOURCE MATERIAL

This thesis draws upon six principal sources. **First** are my own records and recollections as a children's officer to three different authorities, starting in April 1948, before the act of that year was passed. Formal association with child care continued as general secretary of The British Association of Social Workers, then as director of social services for [REDACTED] and finally as clerk to The National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations, retiring in 1982 at the age of seventy. The **second** source upon which the thesis is based is a collection of files containing the reports written by Home Office inspectors about the performance of child care authorities. The reports, which have been preserved, cover 127 of the authorities which operated in England between 1951 and 1958 and relate broadly to the settled, but still somewhat formative years of the young departments from 1958. The **third** source studied was government publications such as reports of the Home Office children's department and especially The Curtis Report itself, which is extensively quoted in the succeeding chapters. The **fourth** source is the records of The Association of Children's Officers, of which I was honorary secretary for seventeen years, beginning at its foundation in 1949. The **fifth** sources is a single case study made from the carefully maintained case records of a family, from

whom two sons were received into the care of a large and highly reputable local authority in the mid-fifties, each remaining in care until reaching the age of eighteen - ten or more years later. The study is contained in The Appendix and extracts from it (under the pseudonym, 'The Curtis Family') are quoted in relevant chapters of this thesis as examples illustrating the issues under discussion. The **sixth** source has been the study of the periodical literature on child care and social work from 1938 to the present day, especially the two current social work weeklies and their predecessors, **Case Conference** and **Child Care Quarterly** and **The Journal of The Association of Psychiatric Social Workers**. The **seventh** source was from children in care, now family friends who have kept in touch, who continue to tell me more and more of the severe disabilities they underwent under my personal supervision.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL

The main body of the thesis, apart from the introductory and closing chapters, deals with the performance of children's departments, as assessed by the inspectors in their reviews. These operations were carried out from the mid-fifties onwards. Before that year the inspectorate had been running itself in by getting to know the set-up and personalities of each authority, including chairpeople, town and county clerks and architects as well as staffs of children's departments. The routine inspections of children's homes, nurseries, approved schools and remand homes broadly continued in their accustomed way. To those being inspected in these establishments little seemed to be changed by the Children Act. Meanwhile an additional new breed of inspectors was evolving, many of whom were interested in the whole work of the departments. It began with an exercise called 'boarding out reviews', that is to say inspection of the work of boarding out visitors by studying their case papers and accompanying

them on visits to foster homes. It was soon realised that boarding out was only one aspect of the diverse social work being undertaken in the new departments. The inspectors then began to conduct wide ranging reviews, covering many (though not all) aspects of a department's activities. In 1963 the chief inspectors drafted guidelines, with headings under which reports on reviews could be compiled. Inspectors showed singular independence and not all the headings were covered in each review report. In the end it was only possible to identify, in the generality of these reports, ten topics upon which the inspectors could be mainly counted upon to record their observations and opinions. These several topics each form the subject of a chapter in this thesis. The performance of each department under each topic was assessed on a five point scale, judging from what the inspectors reported. The model for this assessment scale was taken from that used in 1968 by the Home Office inspectors in assessing the performance of children's departments for the Royal Commission on Local Government in England. Assessments were made from a total of 250 review reports. Quotations from the inspectors' reports show some of the best and some of the worst authorities' performances. Half of all the children were in the care of the seventeen largest authorities. Sixty-one, about half of all the English authorities, each had fewer than 250 children in care. The remaining 44 authorities each had between 250 and 1,000 children in care. This will be of importance if rumoured proposals to abolish the county councils and transfer their functions to the district councils come to fruition.

What are the lessons to be derived from The Curtis Experiment? The short answer seems to be that the experiment was valuable, but was continued for an unnecessarily long time. The establishment of small specialist departments creates a body of people; users, councillors and staff with a vested interest in

their continuance. The frailty of human nature so deeply flawed the effective operation of the Curtis proposals that some children were subjected to heartrending suffering and damage to spirit. Curtis is not to be blamed for lacking the magic gift of hindsight. The Curtis Experiment was a necessary process towards the provision of rather better care for children.

DAME MYRA CURTIS

Chairman : The Care of Children Committee

Principal : Newnham College Cambridge



CHAPTER ONE

CARE BEFORE AND AFTER CURTIS

"The Local Government Act transferred the Poor Law functions to the councils of counties and county boroughs and abolished the boards of guardians. But the principle of the Poor Law remained unaltered. The close control which the Minister of Health exercised over the guardians is now exercised over the councils concerned."

W Ivor Jennings

'The Poor Law Code' 2nd Edition 1936

1. 1 THE CURTIS EXPERIMENT

The Committee met on 64 days, examined 229 witnesses and considered 114 memoranda. Individually or in small groups they visited 451 institutions, interviewed members or officers of 58 authorities and visited foster homes. On 4 January 1946 they published an Interim Report on Training of Staff ⁰⁵².

The Curtis Committee was not universally approved. Willie Gallacher, a communist member of parliament, asked why there were no working class members. Others criticised the noticeable shortage of parents amongst the women members of the committee of which the following were either single or childless; Curtis, Adamson, Clement-Brown, Fildes, Harford, Jones and Temple. Some newspapers regretted the appointment of Miss Curtis who had recently signed the Report on London County Council Remand Homes, which by its extra use of emphasis and other devices tended to detract from the news value of Basil Henrique's not wholly unjustifiable complaints about remand homes. Until 1948 children in England who were living apart from their parents were the responsibility of a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies. The fifth of July

1948 marked the inauguration of a surprising experiment in social administration which continued until 31 March 1971. This can be called 'The Curtis Experiment' because it was launched in response to the principal recommendation of The Curtis Report ⁰⁵¹. The experiment was the setting up in each local authority of a separate and relatively small department to be concerned exclusively with the care of 'deprived' children. It was brought into force by the Children Act 1948, which obliged every county council and county borough to set up a separate children's committee and to appoint a children's officer to administer the functions relating to children living away from their own homes. The authorities were expressly precluded, by section 41 of the act, from employing their children's officers in any other capacity except with the Secretary of State's consent, which was rarely given. Thus was created a new department which was much smaller than any other operational department of the authority, having at its head an officer carrying a smaller, though vital, span of responsibility, deploying relatively small resources and receiving a relatively small salary and being accorded a relatively low status in the council's management hierarchy. The idea was to ensure that the children's needs were separately advocated and protected by an independent committee and an independent chief officer concerned exclusively with them. At the outset the members of The Curtis Committee had been concerned to note that children were often deprived of proper care in their own homes. Unhappily, they concluded that such children did not fall within their terms of reference.

1. 2 CHILDREN'S COMMITTEES AS A PANACEA

When children's committees and separate children's departments were first established they were hailed as the panacea for childhood deprivation. A body of dogma preserved the separate children's departments inviolate against any

proposals for linking them with services to other groups of people. Preserving the separate identity of children's departments became an article of faith to many of the colleagues who shared the privilege of being a children's officer. Yet by the late nineteen-sixties the leaders of opinion among those who were still active were campaigning for large comprehensive social services departments into which the children's departments were to be subsumed. The experiment ended following the report of the Seebohm Committee which recommended the creation of comprehensive departments to provide personal social services to a wide range of people who were vulnerable by reason of age or other circumstances 078.

1. 3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXPERIMENT

The lessons to be learned from the experiences of children's departments are significant, not only for the future of children in public care or at risk of entering care. They are significant also for the organisation and use of resources in the personal social services. The purpose of this research is to show to what extent the expectations aroused by the Curtis Committee were fulfilled during the 23 years before children's committees ceased to exist in 1971 and what disadvantages flowed from that arrangement. There are lessons to be learned from the slow pace of change in the 23 years, in the course of which the happiness and potential of a generation of children might be jeopardised. For example, planning by means of statutory reviews was sometimes skimped, family contacts were often lost, the importance to a child of his life story was neglected and many social workers failed to communicate adequately with the children. Reasons justifying the removal of children from parental care were never universally established. In the light of experience and after studying material in the record office, it is apparent that children's departments fell short of meeting the children's simplest requirements. By analogy with the police, they

saw themselves depicted in 'Dixon of Dock Green' whereas to the children and their families, and to some staff, they looked more like 'The Bill' or 'Hill Street Blues'.

1. 4 THE SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

Children's departments operated for twenty-two years and about eight months during which time about one million children in England are recorded as having been admitted to the care either of local authorities or of the managers of approved schools. The actual number of children affected must have been significantly fewer because some would have been admitted twice or more; some several times during their childhood. When children's departments ceased to exist there were 87,377 children in care (including children in community homes with education on the premises) ²¹⁷. These latter were, until 1970, treated separately as being in the care of approved school managers. These 87,377 comprised 0.65 percent of the estimated child population under the age of 18: about one child in 154 of the total child population was in care at any one time. During the twelve months preceding March 1971, 64,545 admissions to care were recorded, but of this number 12,328 were included by an administrative device, transferred from the care of approved school managers and 'deemed to be in the care of a local authority by virtue of paragraph 7 (2) of schedule 4 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1969'. The number, then, who personally experienced being admitted to public care during that year was 52,217. Of these, no fewer than 16,006 (about one-third) were admitted because of what was recorded as the short term illness or confinement of a parent or guardian. Experience tells that the majority of these 16,006 would be back home within six months of admission - many of them within six weeks. During those twelve months, 39,043 children were discharged to the care of a parent, guardian,

relative or friend and only 4,553 passed out of public care by reason of reaching adulthood - less than ten percent of all the children who went out of care during the year. Of the 39,043 leaving care during the year, a proportion would have been admitted in previous years. Only one-tenth of all children leaving public care conformed to the popular stereotype of 'growing up in care'. It is meaningless to calculate 'an average duration of short stays'. Some children came into care for a few hours. Some, ostensibly admitted for a short stay, lingered in care for years because of changed circumstances or inertia on the part of the parents or of the authorities. Similarly the statistics, in the form in which they were presented by the Home Office, do not permit the computation of an average length of stay in care since many children going out of care in one statistical year would have been admitted in previous years. These figures illustrate the dynamic nature of the task undertaken by children's departments. Less than one-tenth of all children passing out of care conformed to the idea of an orphan growing through childhood to adulthood in public care.

1. 5 CHILD CARE UNDER THE POOR LAW

In most western countries there had been arrangements for looking after orphan children and those whose parents did not adequately provide for them. In England (and Wales) responsibility was entrusted to the parishes in 1603 by Statute 39, Eliz. c.3. This law was intended to set up a system of minimal shelter for indigent people of all ages. Two centuries later Chadwick and Nassau Senior inspired 'the New Poor Law', enshrined in the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834. This provided for the parishes to be grouped into unions, under boards of guardians, large enough to provide and maintain workhouses. Some of the buildings erected by the guardians are still in use today for mentally handicapped people or as hospitals for the long-term care of elderly people. By

the Poor Law Act of 1930, the county and county borough councils assumed responsibility for poor law services and the boards of guardians were abolished. Their symbolic role as 'guardians of the poor' was, however, carried over, in 1930, into 'the guardians' committees' consisting of elected councillors and co-opted members who, in the counties, subjected the officials of the remote public assistance committees in the shire halls to a measure of local oversight. The history of children cared for by the guardians and the public assistance committees can be traced in the extensive annual reports of the Poor Law Commissioners and of their successors, the Local Government Board, and later, the Ministry of Health, continuously from 1834 to 1948.

1. 6 CHILDREN IN TROUBLE

Side by side with the Poor Law, a separate system for children committed to care by the courts had evolved over the preceding hundred years. The first Reformatory Schools Act of 1854 authorised the establishment of such schools and empowered courts to commit juvenile offenders to them. Previously courts had sent child delinquents to prison or transportation. Voluntary societies, even before 1854, had experimented with corrective institutions which the children attended voluntarily, either seeking shelter or under threat of prosecution. The Magdalen Hospital (for sexually wayward girls) was established in 1758 and The Philanthropic Society opened its first institution (for both sexes) in 1792. By 1858 there were over fifty reformatory schools. The Industrial Schools Act of 1857 facilitated the establishment of separate schools for children who were orphaned, vagrant, neglected or in moral danger. Before 1899, when a spell of imprisonment before admission to a reformatory school was obligatory, the external differentiation between the two types of school began to disappear. Winston Churchill, as Home Secretary, combined them by the Children Act 1908

to become 'Certified Schools'. The next cosmetic change of name to 'approved schools' was effected by the Children & Young Persons Act 1933, and this title survived for 36 years when the 1969 act of the same name changed them to 'community homes with education on the premises', 'CH(E)s' for short. Deriving historically from the prison system, the care of children committed by the courts was always overseen by the Home Office. A separate children's branch of the Home Office was established in 1913. Renamed 'the children's department' after the first world war, it continued to supervise approved schools, remand homes, adoption, control of employment and children committed to the care of 'fit persons'. In 1948, with the implementation of the Children Act and the abolition of the Poor Law, it took into the Home Office most of the ministry's responsibility for the care of deprived children. The history of children subject to court orders is to be found in the annual reports of the inspectors of reformatory, industrial and certified schools from 1858 onwards and in the five successive reports of the Home Office children's department issued between 1923 and 1938. The Curtis Committee estimated that in 1946 there were 11,200 youngsters in approved schools, 1,540 in remand homes and 13,000 committed to the care of 'fit persons'.

1. 7 CHILDREN UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEES

Since the notorious Mrs Dyer and the baby farmers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the local authorities had had a duty under the Infant Life Protection Acts to oversee the care of young children who were being looked after, for reward, by those apart from the parents or relatives. At the end of 1944, the Curtis Committee estimated that there were 14,000 children, less than nine years old, being supervised by health visitors. These children included an unspecified number who were protected under the Adoption of Children

(Regulation) Act 1939, having been placed for adoption by 'third parties' pending the hearing by the court of the adopters' application for an order. In addition, maternity and child welfare committees in some areas exercised their powers to establish residential nurseries. The Curtis Committee was unable to estimate how many children there were in such nurseries. Many of the children would have been entrusted to the public health nurseries by public assistance committees who would then be responsible for their maintenance.

1. 8 OTHER CHILDREN MAINTAINED AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS

Apart from the children referred to above, who were maintained or supervised by one or other committee of a local authority, there were three significant groups of children being cared for apart from their parents. The Curtis Committee estimated their numbers in 1946 to be as follows:

- a about 33,500 children in the charge of voluntary organisations - an unknown proportion of these would already have been in the care of local authorities and entrusted by them to the day-to-day care of voluntary societies;
- b 411 war orphans, cared for by the Ministry of Pensions;
- c about 5,300 children who had been evacuated from danger areas in war time and whose families had not resumed care of them by that time.

1. 9 DEFINING THOSE FOR WHOM COMMITTEES WERE TO BE RESPONSIBLE

The adjective 'deprived' does not adequately circumscribe the group of children for whom, in 1948, the new children's committees and departments were to assume responsibility. Broadly speaking, the new committees had, at first, no substantial responsibilities for children in maintained or independent boarding schools (though the children's officer for Middlesex is said to have discussed

with the headmaster of Harrow School, the application of the Child Life Protection Provisions to the boarders before recommending the Middlesex County Council to exempt him, under Subsection 258 (5) of the Public Health Act 1936, from further visitation) ^a. Although The Curtis Committee had addressed themselves, in paragraphs 89 - 94 of their report, to the 7,512 children who were, on 1 January 1946, certified under the Mental Deficiency Acts, the Children Act, by Section 8, specifically excluded such children from care under that act. Section 7 of the same act empowered the Minister of Pensions to remove from care any child for whom he had a duty to make provision. Similarly children in hospitals, nursing homes and public or voluntary institutions for physical handicap were assumed, not always correctly, to have caring families and not to need the intervention of a public authority in a parental role. Moreover, many children experienced deprivation in their own homes; for example, sensory deprivation, deprivation of affection and security and deprivation in the spheres of education, housing, clothing, warmth and nutrition. The first children's committees were largely to concern themselves with children experiencing a particular kind of deprivation - that of living away from their parental homes in circumstances where the capacity of the family to exercise parental care and responsibility, as opposed to medical or educational care was, for the time being, in question. For convenience this thesis will follow the fashion of the times to which it relates and will use the word 'deprived' to describe children either in the direct care of a local authority, a voluntary organisation or who were about to come into such care. They were a readily identifiable group with powerful emotive appeal: in 1948 the time was ripe to do something special for them.

C H A P T E R T W O

CONFLICT ON THE WAY TO CHANGE

"Unlike the period between the wars, there have been none of the bitter feelings which massive unemployment and poverty created. Two Nations had grown gradually but steadily into one."

Harold Macmillan
'Winds of Change' 1914-1939 Macmillan 1964

2. 1 CAMPAIGN FOR THE BREAK UP OF THE POOR LAW

The end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century saw the growth of voluntary philanthropy for children and two world wars in which the rich and the poor seemed, to some extent, to share the danger and sacrifice. Children, too, shared in these sacrifices by evacuation and residential nurseries described by Titmuss to release mothers of young children for war work. In 1906 the government set up the Royal Commission on the Poor Law ³⁵⁷. The majority of the members of the commission were broadly in favour of retaining and improving the existing poor law. A minority took a different view. Their report included the following observations and recommendations:

"The Destitution Authorities have proved themselves inherently unfitted by the nature of their functions, to have the charge of the 237,000 children of school age for whom the State assumes responsibility of maintenance."

The 237,000 children included all the dependent children of families which were on 'outdoor relief'. The number in group residential care, workhouses or children's homes, was probably about 40,000.

"The only practicable way of securing unity of administration is to entrust the whole of the public provision for children of school age to the local education authorities."

There were 50,000 children under five dependent on outdoor relief and another 15,000 in poor law institutions. It was recommended that these younger children

should be transferred to the public health services. The minority report was supported by a 'Campaign for the Break-Up of the Poor Law' which, during the next four decades, never completely lost its impetus among the minority who thought about this sombre area of social studies.

2. 2 LOCAL AUTHORITIES TAKE OVER

In 1929 the conservative government did away with the boards of guardians of the poor and transferred their responsibilities to the county and county borough councils. The Local Government Act 1929, Section 5, required that in preparing administrative schemes under a consolidating measure which became the Poor Law Act 1930, local authorities should try to secure that all assistance should be provided other than by way of poor relief if possible. There was, however, no statutory provision for the care of destitute children of school age, except by way of poor relief unless they had been brought before the courts and committed to an approved school or to the care of a local authority or other fit persons. There was not time to bring about a root and branch reform of the poor law before the old law was repealed. When the prime minister took office he had higher priorities than reforming the poor law. The parliamentary draughtsmen had already prepared the consolidating measure, which had to reach the statute book in time to take over from the guardians. Hence the retention of the poor law for another fifteen years with the archaic definition of the authorities' duty '... to set to work or put out as apprentices ...' the children in their direct care. Although the Poor Law Act does not specifically authorise the boarding-out of children, it contains, in Section 52(3), one passing reference which implies that boarding-out is one of the recognised methods of providing for the care of destitute children and Part VI of the Public Assistance Order 1930 contains detailed rules on the subject.

2. 3 APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGY TO MATERNAL DEPRIVATION

Before 1930, the care of children away from their parents was seen primarily as looking after their physical, spiritual and educational needs. The poor law sought to keep the children physically fit, indoctrinated in accordance with their respective religious persuasions and educated enough to make them efficient citizens as servants, soldiers, manual tradesmen, agricultural or industrial workers. The nineteen-twenties marked the beginning, in Britain, of serious study of the emotional implications of parental deprivation. The movement of ideas burgeoned throughout the nineteen-thirties and forties and reached a larger measure of acknowledgement with the publication of Bowlby's 'Maternal Care and Mental Health', three years after children's committees had been established⁰³⁵. This was followed by a paperback summary, 'Child Care and the Growth of Love'⁰³⁴. Bowlby's ideas were, however, accepted years earlier among workers with maladjusted children and they contributed to the concepts underlying the Curtis Report, two of whose authors, Sybil Clement-Brown and Lucy Fildes, had worked with Dr William Moodie's child guidance training centre in Canonbury. Earlier, in the nineteen-twenties, Dr J C Spence, consultant paediatrician at the Babies' Hospital in Newcastle-upon-Tyne said that it was an 'indispensable part' of nursing sick children, under the age of three, that the mother should be admitted with her child.

2. 4 FACETS OF THE APPLICATION OF CHILD PSYCHIATRY IN THE 1930s

- (a) The establishment of child guidance clinics in London, Liverpool and a few other places in the early nineteen-thirties accompanied by the setting up of an annual inter-clinic conference.
- (b) The consolidation in professional training for social workers (a development from the traditional study of social administration). First, the mutation of lady almoners into medical social workers with recognised specific training, a professional institute and a register. Secondly, the introduction, with the help of the Commonwealth Fund, of training for psychiatric social work with a professional

association and a register. Thirdly, the development of training for probation officers. Social workers from all three of these disciplines were appointed to senior posts in children's departments when they came to be established, as were many general social workers from social science courses.

- (c) The development of child psychiatry as a medical specialism with emphasis on preventive as well as curative treatment by stressing the importance of permanent love in infancy.
- (d) The development of psychology as an educational and clinical discipline in schools and child psychiatric clinics.
- (e) The use of reports on a child's home surroundings, school record and medical history as a magisterial tool in handling young offenders. In the early nineteen-thirties Sir William Clark Hall sometimes invited Dr William Moodie and Miss Nancy Fairbairn, a psychiatric social worker, to attend and advise him when he sat in a juvenile court in east London. Rules of Court provided for the submission of medical, school and home surroundings reports to help decide a future for offenders and those in need of care or protection. These might include psychological and psychiatric reports .
- (f) The growing recognition of links between parental deprivation and delinquency. There were three clinics in London having a special concern for children in trouble. The Tavistock Clinic, the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency (later altered to the Institute for the Study of Delinquency) and the centre in Canonbury where Michael Fordham, John Bowlby and Kenneth Soddy were formulating ideas about maternal deprivation. From America, Healey and Bronner offered¹⁴⁷ what looked like a rational explanation of juvenile deviance .
- (g) In 1938 the Caldecott Community became the first school to be recognised by the Board of Education under Section 80 of the Education Act 1921 for the education of children with behaviour problems.

2. 5 DISCREPANCY IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN

The Children & Young Persons Act of 1932 (consolidated in 1933) resulted in many more children being committed to the care of local authorities by juvenile courts. Children so committed were cared for by education committees and were generally placed in foster homes. Comparison between the attention devoted by education committees to juvenile offenders and to those in need of care or protection and, on the other hand, the care given by public assistance committees to destitute children, was usually unfavourable to the latter. Approved schools were largely

headed by qualified teachers, were better staffed and provided more thoughtful care than that offered by the staff of public assistance committees. In the public assistance homes the children's schooling was divorced from their day-to-day care out of a desire to make their formal education like that of children living with their parents. However, the out-of-school hours, weekends and holidays were supervised by care staff who, in the main, had no training for their crucial task. Their preparation for the job was confined to learning the traditional patterns of care and activity which were handed down from their predecessors. The public assistance committees also contrasted unfavourably with the larger voluntary children's societies. The National Children's Home and Barnardo's, for example, had instituted training for housemothers as early as the eighteen-eighties. Nevertheless there were many good people among both groups.

2. 6 MISS LEILA RENDEL

The contribution of Miss Leila M Rendel and the Caldecott Community, which overlapped the two wars, is not yet fully documented. Three key publications, 15, 16 and 17 by Miss Rendel are out of print and the first is so rare that a copy was not available at the Caldecott Community itself. One or two copies are in private hands. Edith Rendel established a large day nursery in St Pancras in 1908. Her sister, Leila, opened a nursery school next door in 1911. On the walls were pictures by Randolph Caldecott whose name was subsequently adopted as the title of the community. Miss Rendel's vivid description reads ³⁴¹:

"By 1917 social conditions in St Pancras ... made daily life intolerable. There was no escape from incidents of sickness, birth and death, or numerous raids, casualties and murders ... the parents ... asked that their children be taken from the turmoil of the mean streets and educated in the country.

"In 1939 we were also asked to take the tough, unhappy and often very difficult evacuee children who could not be placed in foster homes."

From 1941 to 1946, 100 children and 21 adults were evacuated to Dorset where Miss Rendel and her staff were asked also to staff and supervise the three county evacuation hostels. In 1946 an experimental reception and observation centre was established by Miss Rendel with £14,000 provided by the Nuffield Foundation. In 1951 it was handed over to Kent County Children's Committee. Two thousand pounds remained and was used to found an experimental unit for children of normal or above normal intelligence who were not progressing as they should in ordinary schools. The success of this was recorded in a book, 'The Insecure Child' and contributed to the pressure for reforms in public care for children ³⁴³. In 'The Child of Misfortune' the urgency of Leila Rendel's concern was emphasised by what we might call greatly exaggerated gloom ³⁴². For example:

"The Child of Divorced or Separated Parents. Such home conditions frequently reach a crisis, separations or even disappearance of parent follows with the consequent complete disintegration of home life ... For such children partisanship is almost inevitable, they are torn by divided loyalties.

"Illegitimate Children. A normal home is rarely possible for these devalued children.

"Neglected or Abandoned Children. The children of criminal parents and those, belonging to a strata of society which used to be known as 'the submerged tenth' and who are today recognised as problem families.

"Children of Mentally Disabled Parents (including cases of chronic alcoholism, neurotics and borderline cases of mental deficiency). The children of such parents are usually mismanaged and rejected."

If a proportion of the children's officers and child care officers in the early years of the new departments saw themselves as rescuing children from a wide variety of harmful parents, it would come as no surprise. For Miss Rendel the rescue was only the beginning. She ensured that those who came to her from supposedly inadequate homes were provided with substitute care, better than most.

2. 7 EVACUATED CHILDREN

From 1939 the evacuation of children from dangerous areas pointed the urgent need to provide alternative care for those who conformed insufficiently in behaviour to be billeted acceptably in private families. 'Hostels for maladjusted children' began as temporary, desperate and primitive expedients but, as the war went on, became the experimental forerunners of 'therapeutic communities'; places where a child could be contained and tolerated and, perhaps, positively helped to come to terms with his feelings and frustrations. Notable in this field was Oxfordshire where Dr Donald Winnicott and his future wife, Clare Britton, a psychiatric social worker, established a number of hostels ^{b,c}. 'Hostels for Difficult Children : A Survey of Experience under the Evacuation Scheme', published in 1944, surveyed a sample of 48 out of 215 hostels then in use ²⁹¹. It recommended units not exceeding 25 children of mixed ages and a ratio of one adult to five children. Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud began to publish their findings about the residential group care of pre-school children ⁰⁴³. Their analysis of its strengths and weaknesses impressed an elite group of people who were influential in the planning of nurseries. In 1945 the category 'maladjusted' was added to the types of handicap defined in the Handicapped Pupils and School Health Service Regulations 1945. Evacuation acquainted middle class people with the conditions under which some children had been brought up in the towns. In November 1940 the Minister of Health appointed a non-parliamentary committee chaired by Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare, MP, to examine conditions in the reception areas. In 1943 the Women's Group on Public Welfare published 'Our Towns' ⁴²². In the preface Margaret Barfield wrote:

"We must take the needs of the community as a whole, get right down to the foundations and build a co-ordinated structure of services which leaves no gap. Education - physical, mental and social must be the birthright of all ... This is the attempt of a small group of

working professional women, all familiar at first hand with the conditions of poverty, to make a national survey of the conditions of town life in England which might be held responsible for those features in the physical condition, habits and conduct of the evacuees which were the subject of complaint by their hostesses ... (this survey) ... is made as a result of representations by the National Federation of Women's Institutes - who think that the domestic habits and customs of a minority of town-dwellers, disclosed by evacuation, should be explored."

The book said (on page 4) that 'the country rang with these accusations'. Ms Barfield enquired:

"Why the shock? Probably the legislation of the last thirty years and the visible improvement in the condition of the poor means that the ordinary citizen had come to believe that all was well with our society ... Those who have done personal investigations know the extraordinary differences between looking at schemes from above downwards and from below upwards."

In chapter one of the book, 'Evacuation: The Window through which Town Life was seen', the authors continued to display this broadminded yet sensitive understanding of the evacuees and, equally, of their hostesses. The town children's language was a constant source of complaint. At that time it was forbidden to print or broadcast certain vulgar words. Bernard Shaw's putting the word 'bloody' into Eliza Dolittle's vocabulary added a new euphemism to the language. It was in this context that 'Our Towns' wrote (on page 52):

"Swearing ... in small children is meaningless. In the hop fields a child of apparently some three years was sitting stripping hops with a dummy in her mouth. She ran short of hops, removed the dummy, shouted for 'more bleeding bloody hops' and put the dummy back again."

The authors recommended (on page 53) that a study should be made of 'the problem family': a concept which was appropriate to its time but has, in the ensuing fifty years, attached a derogatory label to widely diverse people who are perceived to deviate from society's shifting norms. One particular passage (on page 54) has passed into folk lore. Those evacuated from the slums of Grimsby, Hull and Manchester were said to be ...

"... notoriously badly equipped ... Some children arrived sewn into

a piece of calico with a coat on top and no other clothes at all."

In the years between the two world wars there was a catchphrase - 'coals in the bath'. It described the attitude of those who opposed expenditure on slum clearance because those who were rehoused would only use the baths for storing coal. After the publication of 'Our Towns' (and through no fault of the authors) the expressions 'sewn into their clothes' replaced 'coals in the bath' as a catchphrase to describe the attitude towards the feckless. There is no doubt that stitching sometimes replaced a missing button. But it would tax the skill of a talented dress designer to sew a child into 'a piece of calico'. Occasionally at school medical examinations before the second world war, children were wearing combinations which could not be fully removed because they were 'sewn on'. In 1939 the entire personnel of the British armed forces below the rank of warrant officer were expected to sleep in their underclothes. Throughout the war no provision was made by the authorities for laundering of their pyjamas. Is it surprising that some of the wives thought the same? 'Our Towns' was a thoughtful and carefully balanced response to the 'ringing accusations' of a few of the hostesses. Most people only remembered the highlights - especially the bit about evacuees sewn into their clothes. (Mobilised in the volunteer reserve in September 1939 and managing to get posted to an aerodrome in the village to which my wife, a teacher, had evacuated her class of eleven to fourteen-year-olds, I was able to accompany her on visits to those children in their foster homes. The women's institutes had been right to call for an exploration of the domestic habits of a **minority** of town dwellers.) But the labels continue. As late as 1954 a magistrate, inspecting the bedrooms in a children's home, told me she knew that 'working class children don't like having a bed to themselves' d.

2. 8 PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE PLIGHT OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN DURING THE WAR

The concept of 'One Nation', implicit in the need to mobilise all classes for the pursuit of the war, provided fruitful ground in which news about mistreatment of disadvantaged children flourished. Issues concerning these children included:

The Hereford Juvenile Court Affair

In 1943 two boys aged 11 and 13 were committed to care and each received four strokes of the birch before their parents had a chance to appeal. This drew attention by newspapers to intervention in the care and treatment of disadvantaged children. The facts were set out in Lord Justice Goddard's 11,000 word report compiled after the Lord Chief Justice, sitting with two others in the Divisional Court, had denounced 'a complete neglect of the rules of justice and of the administration of the criminal law'. This revealed powerful elements demanding that justice be seen to be done even to impoverished child delinquents. The use of Tribunals of Inquiry of (Evidence) Act was rarely used and only for matters of great concern.

The Death of Dennis O'Neil at Bank Farm

In 1944 the newspapers reported the trial of Gough for the death of his foster son, Dennis. He was convicted and sentenced to several years' imprisonment for manslaughter. The government appointed Sir Walter Monckton to inquire into the tragedy. His published report revealed deficiencies in the general arrangements for supervising the welfare of boarded-out children and formed the basis for the revised Boarding-Out Regulations. Sir Walter did not propose the setting up of periodical reviews. That was believed by the Inspectors to have been inserted in the Boarding-Out Rule 1946 at the suggestion of Arthur Norris, chief inspector at the Home Office, and has become central to all work with children and is embodied in international guidelines.

The London Remand Homes Inquiry

Late in 1944 Mr Basil Henriques, supported by other magistrates, publicly criticised conditions for juveniles detained in London's remand homes. In consequence the government appointed a barrister and an academic to investigate. Their report was couched in more temperate language than the original allegations and it disappointed some journalists who had hoped for newsworthy revelations. The academic member of the inquiry was Miss Myra Curtis. Within a few weeks she was appointed chair of the Care of Children Committee, an appointment which was not universally welcomed in the press and parliament.

The 'Residual Evacuees'

In 1945 the inability of some families to receive back their evacuated children through death, illness, homelessness and other disruptions resulted in an estimated 5,200 children remaining in the reception

areas on 31 March 1946. Not all of these were 'deprived'. Many grew up happily as foster children with their substitute parents in the reception areas and a proportion were adopted. In some instances children returned to their wartime homes for good after an unrewarding trial period with their biological parents. The Curtis Committee was to comment:

"These children might have become chargeable to the poor law authorities but, **having regard to the fact that their situation was largely attributable to the war**, the government decided to provide for them by an interim scheme until new arrangements for the care of destitute children generally are brought into being."

Two factors significantly affected the decision not to allow the evacuees to come under the poor law. The first was not to put an extra burden on local government, since the existence of the evacuees was due to war the taxpayer should pay. But there was also a desire not to attach to the evacuee the stigma and possible undue hardships of the poor law. Sir Walter Monckton had already undertaken to study the administrative lessons to be drawn from the O'Neil tragedy. His report was published two months later, in May 1944, but the civil servants advising the ministers already knew the facts and, from them, Sir Walter's broad conclusions were inescapable²⁹¹. The conventional version of the reasons for setting up the Curtis Committee began with conditions of a small minority of the evacuees as revealed in 'Our Towns' and led through the O'Neil tragedy to Lady Allen's letter in 'The Times' in July 1944. This explanation is silent as to the views of the permanent secretaries.

2. 9 WARTIME MORALS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF 'ONE NATION'

After 1939, from being a nation divided into two broad classes, the less advantaged who experienced slums, unemployment, poverty and malnutrition, Britons were invited to see themselves as being **One Nation** for the duration of the war. They faced the danger and suffering and acknowledged the right of all to share in the supposed fruits of victory. Traditionally the concept of 'One

'Nation' is attributed to Benjamin Disraeli. His novel 'Sybil' is claimed by Disraeli's biographer, Davis, to be ⁰⁹²:

"... a major contribution to the important task of identifying and directing public attention toward the growing fissure of English society between the two nations - The Rich and The Poor.

It proposed no solution however. Davis continues ambiguously:

"Save in the famous trilogy which includes 'Sybil', all Disraeli's novels are cynical and opportunist and he himself was far from taking the trilogy seriously."

The concept of 'One Nation' is particularly apt to a nation at war. The concept was inherent in exhortations to the common people from powerful people in palace, parliament, press and pulpit from 1939 to 1945, though there were many who fought against it. It continued to exist in the minds of the more progressive conservatives.

2.10 DEMANDS FOR A WELFARE STATE AND OTHER SOCIAL CHANGES

Throughout the war there was tension in the coalition cabinet between those who wanted to devote some time to reconstruction and those who wanted to concentrate exclusively on winning the war. On 10 January 1941, the day that Germany invaded Belgium and Holland, it was announced that the government's committee on reconstruction had commissioned a survey of existing schemes of social insurance to be conducted by an interdepartmental committee under the chair of Sir William Beveridge. On 27 January in the following year the minister wrote to Sir William:

"In view of the issues of high policy which will arise, the departmental representatives should henceforth be regarded as your advisors and assessors on techniques and administration matters. The report will be signed by you alone."

The report, published in 1941, made an immediate impact ⁰²⁴. Public opinion saw it as the end of poverty. For example the public assistance officer for Croydon felt it necessary to advise his committee that 'In spite of the Beveridge

Report', there would still be a need for children's homes. Brian Watkins wrote 402.

"The Beveridge Report incorporated, to an extent that was almost unique ... the vision of one man."

The dearest wish of those who fought in the first world war was to return to normality which so had rudely been interrupted in 1914, but in the second world war it was different. The preceding decade had been one of depression and distress and no one wanted to return to it. There was a widespread desire that Britain, after the war, should be better place in which to live and for a ready leadership for what Churchill grumpily described as 'specious plans for a new world'. The report became a bestseller and queues formed to buy it. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs produced a pamphlet on it. When the coalition government took fright at the possibility that it might be forced into accepting and promising to implement the bureau's plan, it was withdrawn in its entirety. But so great was the outcry that it had to be reissued.

2.11 GROWTH OF COLLECTIVISM

Other factors such as the reduction in size of the average family, also militated for systems of collective welfare. The official history of the war commented:

"The fall in the size of the family had many implications ... As the family shrank the possibilities of interfamily help also shrank ... Young adults ... in the later nineteen-thirties and in the nineteen-forties therefore tended to have ... fewer really near relatives ... who were more likely to help in emergencies ... fewer families had older, reasonably responsible children who could help with babies and the two-to-five year olds."

The history continues:

"In wartime the small families were far more vulnerable ... individual families were dispersed ... mobilisation of man and woman power was so rigorous that it left unoccupied very few people ... The number of persons in need who were of peculiarly dependent ages - under five or over 75 - rose during the war, out of all proportion to the increase in the total population ... What the family ... could no longer do for themselves the state had to help them to do. The

social services, therefore, far from being reduced in wartime had to be expanded ... It would have seemed incredible in 1939 that the war should prove an agent of social advance. Inside and outside government it was assumed normal services would be curtailed. A good many were cut when war broke out but some new services had to be built up and old ones expanded to deal with problems associated with evacuation and dispersal of families, mobilisation of women and housing difficulties ... The Government stepped in to plug the worst gaps. Welfare affected morale in and out of the services."

From 1941 there was pressure for the establishment of a Ministry of Reconstruction resulting in the appointment, on 11 November 1943, of Lord Woolton as the minister for that purpose. The Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, had known Woolton since, as young men, they had been welfare workers.

2.12 THE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Attlee warned his colleagues that decisions about plans should not be postponed. There would probably be a large measure of agreement on many of the questions. On 19 October 1943, Churchill circulated a memorandum, entitled 'War, Transition, Peace'. It listed five urgent postwar tasks including, above all, the provision of employment, especially for ex-servicemen. In a note which Churchill prepared for Attlee, but which he didn't apparently send, he referred to a solid mass of four socialist politicians of the highest quality and authority, three of whom were in the War Cabinet. Attlee said, in his memoirs, "I feel those members who come out of the conservative party are largely non-party or have little political experience". The members of the Reconstruction Committee knew that they had to work within the field of agreement between the two parties. One model of what the committee achieved was the Education Act of 1944, the fruit of the co-operation of Butler for the Conservatives and his Under Secretary, Chuter Ede, for labour, and of the care they took to make it's contents palatable to each other's parties. "It's provisions," Butler writes, "were broadly acceptable to moderate and progressive conservative opinion and

consistently supported by labour men". An attempt was made to make special provision for poor law children but the move was ruled out of order by the Speaker. The act could not come into effect until the war was over, but the statute book marked the intention that some move would be made towards equality of opportunity. Such was the public belief that the equality would be achieved that one middle class parent confessed, in an unguarded moment in 1944, the fear that the money paid in fees for children at independent schools would be wasted, "because children whose parents don't pay for their schooling will get just as good an education".

2.13 THE SPATE OF PUBLICATIONS ON RECONSTRUCTION

In the middle of the war, Karl Mannheim founded the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction. The number of titles bears witness to the enormous interest aroused among the reading classes. At a more popular level the interest of serving men and women was stimulated by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. Full employment, rationing of food, the provision of free or subsidised meals in schools and canteens, milk and welfare foods for mothers and children and the broadening of medical and health services for the armed and auxiliary forces and for those in all kinds of productive work, meant a higher average standard of health. Doctors noted that schoolchildren were taller and healthier and coroners reported a fall in suicides. Having experienced the development of collective welfare services and the rather fairer and effective organisation of society for a common aim, many people were not going to have the clock put back to the competitive individualism of pre-war times.

2.14 CHANGES IN ISSUES BETWEEN THE WARS

Between 1918 and 1939 British governments were severally preoccupied with three

issues. The first, in 1918, was characterised by Lloyd George's promise of 'homes for heroes' and the disillusionment of ex-service men. In 1932 came the economic crisis which caused the fall of the labour government and the formation of a coalition. The third stage, of re-armament, culminated in the outbreak of the second war. Supporters of Chamberlain saw him as a man of peace, whose aims were the promotion of health, housing and education for all. When he was replaced by Churchill in May 1940, the urgency of the times demanded a leader with a single goal - to win the war. The sovereign took a wider view. On 5 May 1940 King George VI referred in his diary to what he called 'an international mission of help after the war'. An observer wrote that the King's mind was, from the early days of the war, occupied not only with maintaining strength, but also with post war reconstruction ⁴⁰⁸. Initiatives taken by the King are thought to have given a considerable impetus to the government's study of domestic post war reconstruction ¹⁴⁵. Butler described how Churchill, inviting him to take the Board of Education, applied a military analogy to the child care scene ⁰⁴⁸. Churchill said, "You will be in the war. You will move poor children from here to here". Butler says Churchill then lifted his inkwell and evacuated imaginary children from one side of his blotting pad to the other, commenting as he did so, "This will be very difficult". On assuming office, Butler wrote to Churchill stressing the need to adapt the educational system to social requirements and to reach a settlement with the churches about their schools and about religious instruction. Churchill replied:

"It will be the greatest mistake to raise the 1902 controversy during the war, and I certainly cannot contemplate it in a new education bill. I think it would also be a great mistake to stir up the public school question at the present time. No one can possibly tell what the financial and economic state of the country will be when the war is over. Your main task at present is to get the schools working as well as possible ... we cannot have party politics in war time, and both your second and third points raise these in a most acute and dangerous form."

Butler decided to disregard Churchill and went straight ahead. Within three years of receiving Churchill's letter, Butler had the Education Act of 1944 on the statute book, receiving warm congratulations from Churchill. "This was typical of the man", wrote Butler. The change in Churchill's attitude towards reform might be dated from his broadcast speech, 'The Home Front', delivered in March 1943 containing the memorable phrase, "there is no finer investment than putting milk into babies". The premier seems to have recognised that after the turn of the battle tide at Alamein six months earlier, the people needed more than a military victory to strengthen their resolve. When Lord Woolton was appointed Minister of Reconstruction with a seat in the war cabinet, a committee was formed comprising senior members of both political parties. It laid the foundations of post-war housing policy, set out the principles for a national health service and for post-war schemes for financial relief in old age, sickness, unemployment and industrial injury.

2.15 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The committee was not set up to decide which government department should oversee child care and they did not attempt to do so. It said:

"We do not accept the view urged by some of our witnesses that a single department should be responsible for every aspect of life of the deprived child. The principle of defining the functions of government departments by the groups of people they look after, rather than by the nature of the work they do, seems to us wrong: in this case we think it would also be administratively clumsy. We feel too, that to consign these children for all purposes to the care of a single ministry would be to emphasise what we wish to minimise ... the extent to which they are marked off from other children, they should come within the purview of the Ministry of Education for education in the same way as children living with their parents ... to the health supervision of the Ministry of Health in the same way as the normal child ... if physically or mentally handicapped they should be treated by the responsible department. If they are delinquent in the sense of requiring personal treatment ... the Home Office must prescribe the treatment for them. The missing element in the lives of these children is the home background, and we consider that all the children in whose lives that has ceased to exist

or ceased to count should be brought under the supervision of a single department. Which department is a question which must be settled on another level, and it does not seem to us to be so important as the achievement of unification."

2.16 UNIFICATION ACHIEVED

Unification (under the Home Office) was effected in 1948. Charles Dickens and earlier writers followed the movement for reform in books like 'Oliver Twist'. Proposals for reform in the care of indigent children moved through a series of inquiries and reports during many years. In 1926, a committee chaired by Mr Justice Tomlin had its terms of reference extended to consider child life protection. In its third report it glanced at children under the poor law, observing that the guardians were 'not primarily a welfare authority'. The committee recommended the transfer of child life protection functions from the guardians to the local authority maternity and child welfare committees, the work being " ... mainly suitable for trained women visitors and the guardians frequently possess no official of this type". Having acknowledged "... It is true that numbers of children are under the guardians' care", the committee members stuck to their terms of reference which did not embrace children in public care. The Tomlin Committee's deliberations had significance for the Children Act 1948. One of its members was Sidney W Harris, an Assistant Under Secretary of State who was to play a leading part in trying to get the ministries to co-operate.

2.17 TENSION BETWEEN MINISTRIES

This story is told in full by Professor R A Parker in his article entitled 'The Gestation of Reform : The Children Act 1948' ⁰¹⁸. The reader should look there for the detailed account. It seems to have started with Sidney Harris who commented:

"It is strange but typical that three or four large departments should be concerned with children and ... though confronted with similar problems should rarely or never take each other into consultation on matters of general policy."

Parker recalled the hope of the Committee on Young Offenders that the dissolution of the boards of guardians in 1930 would tend to make the separation of poor law children from others disappear. He also recorded the Ministry of Health's response to a paper entitled 'The Break-Up of the Poor Law and the Care of Children'. It proposed that all homeless children should be the responsibility of a children's committee in each county and county borough, jointly appointed by local health and education departments. Harris found that co-ordination had happened, to some extent, at local level but centrally there was still little contact. The Ministry of Health had " ... steadfastly resisted the proposal to accommodate some of the children in public assistance institutions and finally gave rather grudging consent to ... a small experiment in London". On 31 January 1938 Harris wrote that eight government departments were concerned with the care of children, those closest to the Home Office being the Education and the Health Ministries. He thought that soundings should be taken among the permanent secretaries of the departments. The Board of Education replied on 4 February 1938 agreeing to a conference but calling first for 'some provisional delimitation of the field'. The conference, chaired by Sir Alexander Maxwell, took place on 25 February 1938, attended by representatives of the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour and Pensions. The Scottish Office and the Unemployment Assistant Board sent representatives. In a note on the conference, Maxwell said that continuous day-to-day co-operation between departments was quite easy to obtain: it was occasional contacts on more general matters that were more difficult to make. There was an angry intervention by Dr Arthur Norris, the chief inspector of the Home Office. He protested at this conference about " ... the constant demands on time of staff for apparently no very definite purpose". The

conclusion was that the Home Office should call further conferences as it saw the need. Each department was to appoint a liaison officer for this purpose.

(Less than a month later, Germany effected the Anschluss with Austria. In September the British and French premiers agreed to the transfer of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia to the Reich. The Home Office was fully occupied in preparing for the second world war. Civil defence and the evacuation of school children made even more pressing demands on the Home Office, Health and Education Ministries: co-operation now having, in Dr Norris' phrase, a very definite purpose. For nearly six years their preoccupation with war and evacuation stifled discussion of the wider issues of co-operation in child care.)

2.18 THE INSECURE CHILD

In June 1943 Miss Leila Rendel published 'The Insecure Child' ³⁴³. She referred to:

"the clumsy administrative machinery available, the overlapping and element of chance determining the fate of the insecure child".

She called for a single government department to supervise and help local authorities:

"... merely to increase existing machinery now under three of our government departments ... will only add to the existing confusion".

On 7 December 1943, an informal committee of Ministry of Health staff, chaired by Mr Barter, reported upon 'children and young persons for whose care further provision is needed when the evacuation scheme ends'. An undated note from Harris to Maxwell reads, 'There is a good deal to be said for an interdepartmental (standing) committee to consider problems relating to the welfare of children'. On 12 January 1944, Barter produced a report (initialled

by 'L.N.3.0.') entitled, 'The Break-Up of the Poor Law : Need for Interdepartmental Machinery for Co-Ordination and Arrangements for Children and Young Persons in Need of Care'. It quoted Leila Rendel as saying that, following the winding-up of the evacuation scheme, the piecemeal administrative machinery and schemes would "require co-ordinating and clarifying by a single government department". On 4 April 1944, a letter from the Home Office to the Ministry of Health said that the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, was keen on a conference and had offered to preside over it. On 15 July 1944, 'The Times' published a letter from Lady Allen of Hurtwood saying that the quality of the public care of children was generations out-of-date and calling attention to the division of responsibility between three separate central government departments, inadequate standards, an inadequate inspectorate and the absence of training for people to look after children. She called for a public inquiry. On 28 July 1944 she wrote to Lord Woolton saying that correspondence had clearly shown:

" ... overlapping, which resulted in varying standards of care and many gaps which none of these departments bridges ... These particularly unfortunate children had ... so far found no place in any other reconstruction plans."

On 31 July 1944 an article in 'The Times' called for an inquiry following Lady Allen's letter. On 4 August 1944 a first draft of terms of reference for a committee of inquiry was drawn up and ended:

"... changes are required in the type of accommodation, the nature of the education and training, the qualifications of the staff and other matters which concern the securing of a happy environment for the children concerned".

An official of the Ministry of Reconstruction commented on the reply that Lord Woolton should make to Lady Allen:

"We both agreed that if Lord Woolton were to refuse to take up the question it would give further ground for representing (fallaciously) that progress and reforms were further blocked because several government departments were concerned and no one authority was responsible. If there is to be a public inquiry, the terms of reference should be so drawn as to make it clear that the committee is not concerned with the machinery of government question."

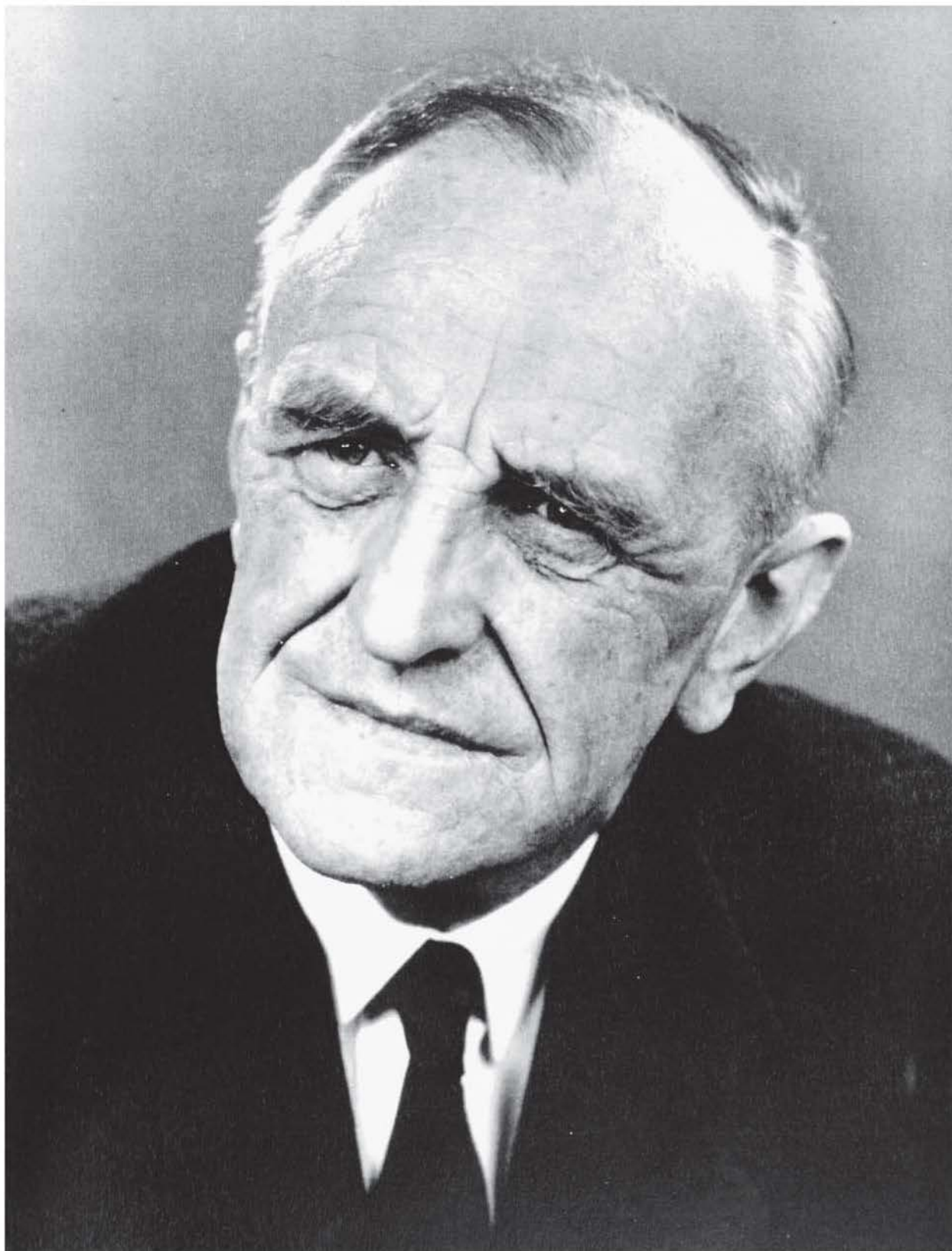
A memorandum dated 30 November 1944 refers to the correspondence and article in 'The Times' and the Parliamentary Notice of Motion of 31 October 1944. The memorandum refers to the division of responsibility:

"It is alleged that the defects are in part due to absence of unified central administration and unlikely to be cured so long as responsibility is dispersed. An inquiry could help bring backward institutions nearer to the level of the better ones. The Government would be in a position to say to the committee that they hoped to make known their views on central administration."

The memorandum emphasised the desirability of exploring ways of reducing the numbers in residential care. The Reconstruction Committee considered the memorandum on 4 December 1944 and the Minister for Education, R A Butler, thought that it should be recognised but that its establishment was affected by short staffing and other wartime difficulties. On 7 December 1944, Home Secretary Morrison announced that, in agreement with the Ministers for Education and for Health, an inquiry relating to England and Wales would be set up:

"To inquire into existing methods of providing for children who, from loss of parents or from any cause whatever, are deprived of a normal home life with their own parents or relatives; and to consider what further measures should be taken to ensure that these children are brought up under conditions best calculated to compensate them for the lack of parental care."

Soon after this announcement Lady Allen published a pamphlet summing up the arguments for a public inquiry and other issues raised in her letter to 'The Times' 002.



DR DONALD WINNICOTT
Consultant Psychiatrist



MRS CLARE WINNICOTT
Lecturer in Child Care
London School of Economics

CHAPTER THREE

HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES TACKLED THE TASK

"The philosophy of public service in a community is aptly put in the words of Winifred Holtby who saw public spiritedness to be geared to social responsibility."

G E Hodgkinson
Introduction to 'Curtis to Seebohm'
by M W Mary Barnes

3. 1 EARLY PREPARATIONS

Although the measures to repeal the Poor Law and to set up separate children's departments were not to receive the Royal Assent until 30 June 1948, advertisements began to appear during the winter of 1947-1948 for the appointment of children's officers to serve the 128 counties and county boroughs of England (and 17 in Wales). Scotland had its 'Clyde' Committee which produced a report which followed Curtis so closely that the Children Act applied, with small variations to Scotland ⁰⁷⁶. The act legislated for the whole of Britain but not to Northern Ireland, which followed with its provincial Children and Young Persons Act in 1950. Some town and county clerks were puzzled where to seek candidates for the new posts and were equally puzzled what salary to offer. Some placed advertisements in the more dignified newspapers but the principal coverage was in the three local government weeklies which also carried a high proportion of advertisements for assistant surveyors and sanitary inspectors. The salary level was roughly equal to these. The former occupations and the qualifications of the first-appointed children's officers, so far as they are known, are set out in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1

Former Occupations and Qualifications of First-Appointed Children's Officers
England 1948-1949

COUNTIES

	Sex	Occupation	Qualification	Grade
1	F	Residential Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	2
2	F	Missionary	Graduate	2
3	F	Educational Administrator	Graduate + Social Science	2
4	F	Teacher	Graduate	3
5	F	Educational Administrator	Further	Unknown
6	F	Social Worker	Further	3
7	F	Residential Social Worker	Moral Welfare Certificate	3
8	M	Educational Administrator	Further	3
9	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
10	M	Psychiatric Social Worker	AAPSW	1
11	F	Teacher	Teaching Certificate	3
12	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	2
13	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	2
14	F	Medical Student	Further	2
15	F	Missionary	Further	3
16	F	Probation Officer	Graduate + Social Science	4
17	F	Educational Administrator	Teaching Certificate	5
18	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	4
19	F	Educational Administrator	Graduate + Social Science	2
20	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	4
21	F	Educational Administrator	Graduate + Social Science	4
22	F	Educational Administrator	Barrister	Unknown
23	F	Social Worker	Social Science	4
24	M	Educational Administrator	Further	2
25	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	2
26	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	2
27	F	Social Worker	Social Science	1
28	F	Factory Inspector	Graduate	5
29	F	Moral Welfare Worker	Moral Welfare Certificate	3
30	F	Social Worker	Social Science	4
31	F	Assistant Medical Officer	Doctor of Medicine	Unknown
32		Jointly with another authority		
33		Jointly with another authority		
34	F	Teacher	Graduate	3
35	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	2
36	M	Probation Officer	Probation Certificate	Unknown
37	F	Psychiatric Social Worker	Graduate + AAPSW	3
38	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
39	F	Educational Administrator	Barrister + Social Science	5
40	F	Educational Administrator	Graduate + Social Science	3
41	F	Psychiatric Social Worker	AAPSW	4
42	F	Social Worker	Social Science	3
43	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

	Sex	Occupation	Qualification	Grade
44	F	Psychiatric Social Worker	Graduate + AAPSW	2
45	M	Refugee Worker	Graduate	2
46	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
47	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
48	F	Educational Administrator	Graduate	Unknown
49	M	Public Assistance Officer	Public Assistance Certificate	1

COUNTY BOROUGH

	Sex	Occupation	Qualification	Grade
50	M	Teacher	Teaching Certificate	4
51		Jointly with another authority		
52	M	Probation Officer	Probation Certificate	3
53	F	Moral Welfare Worker	Moral Welfare Certificate	2
54	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	2
55	M	Social Worker	Further	3
56	F	Hospital Almoner	MIHA	Unknown
57	M	Educational Administrator	Further	Unknown
58		Jointly with another authority		
59	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
60	M	Residential Social Worker	Further	1
61	M	Educational Administrator	Further	2
62	M	Home Office Inspector	Graduate	3
63	F	Educational Administrator	Graduate	2
64		Jointly with another authority		
65	M	Probation Officer	Probation Certificate	3
66		Jointly with another authority		
67	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
68	F	Child Care Student	Child Care Certificate	1
69	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
70	M	Psychiatric Social Worker	AAPSW	5
71	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
72	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	4
73	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
74	M	Educational Administrator	Further	Unknown
75	F	Factory Inspector	Graduate + Social Science	2
76		Jointly with another authority		
77	M	Educational Administrator	Further	5
78	F	Social Worker	Social Science	3
79	M	Minister of Religion	Further	2
80	F	Social Worker	Social Science	Unknown
81	M	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
82	F	Social Worker	Social Science	3
83	F	Social Worker	Social Science	3
84	F	Psychiatric Social Worker	AAPSW	2
85	F	Health Visitor	Further	2
86	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
87	M	Educational Administrator	Further	4
88	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	2
89	F	Educational Psychologist	Graduate	2
90	M	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
91	M	Educational Administrator	Further	2
92	M	Educational Administrator	Further	2
93	F	Teacher	Teaching Certificate	2
94	F	Teacher	Teaching Certificate	4
95	M	Educational Administrator	Further	Unknown
96	F	Social Worker	Social Science	2
97	M	Educational Administrator	Further	5
98	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	2
99	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Soc Science	Unknown

	Sex	Occupation	Qualifications	Grade
100	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	2
101	M	Educational Administrator	Further	3
102	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	4
103	F	Probation Officer	Graduate + Probation Cert	5
104	F	Hospital Almoner	Graduate + MIHA	3
105	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	4
106	F	Social Worker	Social Science	1
107	M	Educational Administrator	Further	2
108	M	Educational Administrator	Graduate	1
109	F	Child Care Student	Child Care Certificate	3
110	M	Residential Social Worker	Further	3
111	F	Teacher	Graduate + Teaching Cert	3
112	F	Social Worker	Social Science	3
113	F	Educational Administrator	Further	1
114	F	Teacher	Graduate	1
115	F	Social Worker	Graduate + Social Science	1
116	M	Educational Administrator	Further	3
117		Jointly with another authority		
118	M	Educational Administrator	Further	4
119	M	Probation Officer	Probation Certificate	2
120	F	Teacher	Graduate	Unknown
121	M	Probation Officer	Probation Certificate	4
122	F	Social Worker	Social Science	3
123	M	Educational Administrator	Further	2
124	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
125	F	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
126	F	Psychiatric Social Worker	Graduate + AAPSW	4
127		Jointly with another authority		
128	M	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

3. 2 GENDER

The Curtis Report made no recommendation as to the sex of the children's officer but forecast that most of the candidates would prove to be women. Women outnumbered men by more than two to one among the first 119 children's officers in England, divided among the authorities as follows:

TABLE 3.2.1
Gender of First-Appointed Children's Officers
England 1948-1949

TOTAL	English Counties	10 Men	37 Women	= 47
	English County Boroughs	31 Men	41 Women	= 72
	All England	41 Men	78 Women	= 119

TABLE 3.2.2
Gender of Last-Appointed Children's Officers
England 1971

TOTAL	English Counties	17 Men	29 Women	= 46
	English County Boroughs	48 Men	32 Women	= 80
	Greater London Authorities	21 Men	11 Women	= 32
	All England	86 Men	72 Women	= 158

TABLE 3.2.3
Gender of First-Appointed Children's Officers from Education Departments
England 1948-1949

TOTAL	English Counties	6 Men	9 Women	= 15
	English County Boroughs	17 Men	2 Women	= 19
	All England	23 Men	11 Women	= 34

TABLE 3.2.4
Gender of First-Appointed Children's Officers from Social Work
England 1948-1949

TOTAL	English Counties	0 Men	10 Women	= 10
	English County Boroughs	1 Men	19 Women	= 20
	All England	1 Men	29 Women	= 30

The English counties appointed proportionately more people from education departments, but the majority of those so appointed were women. In the boroughs the gender balance was reversed in those appointed from education departments. There were two clear reasons for the sex differential between the cities and the countryside. First, the boroughs had centrally-managed education services with posts filled mainly by men, whereas the county education departments often devolved the management of the education services, either formally to 'excepted districts' or informally to divisional offices located in peripheral towns. A superintendent of education welfare in a borough was often a strong candidate for the new post, whereas in the counties superintendents of teams of education welfare officers were less likely to be favourably placed in county hall to lead the field of candidates. Secondly, many boroughs, being targets for enemy bombs in wartime, evacuated some of their children to the counties where women had been appointed at various levels of responsibility to look after their welfare. They were in a better position than superintendents of education welfare to compete for the new jobs in the counties. Before leaving the subject of gender we can glance forward 23 years to see how the sexes divided on the last day on which children's officers were in post - 31 March 1971. Local government changes during 23 years make comparisons imperfect but there was a significant shift from women to men children's officers. The figures are not strictly comparable because of the changes over the 23 years of the county borough boundaries and the big change for 5 to 33 boroughs in Greater London. It is clear, however, that when the time came for a change in a county or a borough council the subsequent choice was more likely to be a man. The women in counties dropped from 37 to 29 and the men increased from 10 to 17 and in the boroughs the women dropped from 41 to 32 and the men increased from 31 to 48. The women were more constant than the men. Only six men finished the 23 years in the same post compared with nineteen women.

3. 3 OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

TABLE 3.3
Previous Occupations of First-Appointed Children's Officers
England 1948-1949

Occupation	Counties	County Boroughs	Total
Educational Administrator	15	19	34
Social Worker	10	20	30
Teacher	3	6	9
Probation Officer	2	5	7
Psychiatric Social Worker	4	3	7
Residential Social Worker	2	2	4
Child Care Student	-	2	2
Factory Inspector	1	1	2
Hospital Almoner	-	2	2
Missionary	2	-	2
Moral Welfare Worker	1	1	2
Assistant Medical Officer	1	-	1
Educational Psychologist	-	1	1
Health Visitor	-	1	1
Home Office Inspector	-	1	1
Medical Student	1	-	1
Minister of Religion	-	1	1
Public Assistance Officer	1	-	1
Refugee Worker	1	-	1
Unknown	3	7	10
<hr/>			
TOTAL	47	72	119
<hr/>			

The largest occupational group consisted of 34 educational administrators. These were people who had been engaged as assistant education officers or as superintendents of welfare services (school attendance officers) prior to their appointment. Of the first 41 male children's officers in England, all except ten came from education departments. Of the first-appointed officers, two women and seventeen men came from education departments. The next largest occupational group was 30 social workers who had not been employed by education committees. Together the two groups number 64, just about half of the total of appointments known at the time of taking the census. These were followed by nine teachers, seven probation officers and seven psychiatric social workers. Of the remaining 32 appointments there were no more than four in any one category. Educational administrators came from the third and middle echelons in educational administration. These had generally been either assistant education officers in charge of special services or superintendents of education welfare services. Special services sections of education departments usually had administrative responsibility for running remand homes and some approved schools and for placing children in these establishments; for representing the authority in the juvenile court and for children who had been committed to the care of the authority as a 'fit person'. Two of the educational administrators had been called to the Bar. The next largest group was social workers who were, in the main, holders of degrees or certificates in social science awarded after a university education which included practical training under supervision in social work. About six of the first children's officers, including the two factory inspectors, were Oxbridge graduates. Fewer than half had experience in local government.

TABLE 3.4

Qualifications of First-Appointed Children's Officers
England 1948-1949

Qualification	Counties	County Boroughs	Total
Graduate + Probation Certificate	-	1	1
Graduate + Psychiatric Social Work Cert	2	1	3
Graduate + Hospital Almoner Certificate	-	1	1
Graduate + Other Social Science Cert	10	8	18
Graduate + Teaching Certificate	-	1	1
Graduate	12	8	20
Social Science Certificate	6	12	18
Probation Certificate	1	4	5
Teaching Certificate	2	3	5
Psychiatric Social Work Certificate	2	2	4
Moral Welfare Certificate	2	1	3
Child Care Certificate	-	2	2
Hospital Almoner Certificate	-	1	1
Public Assistance Certificate	1	-	1
Further Education	6	20	26
Unknown	3	7	10
<hr/>			
TOTAL	47	72	119
<hr/>			

Every candidate seems to have had some kind of further education. There are 26 entries marked as further education from a wide variety of fields. Ten entries are unknown. Curtis was looking for graduates with social science certificates as the ones most likely to be selected. No mention was made of two or three professional qualifications with a register and published list of members, nor of the qualified probation officers who had no list of members available in 1948. In practice they were first-appointed from three of these groups; seven psychiatric social workers, four almoners and four from the probation service. The persons shown as having a social science certificate were those who had completed a university course in social science, more often than not accompanied by a university degree.



3. 5 GRADES OF PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

TABLE 3.5
Grades of First-Appointed Children's Officers
England 1948-1949

Grade	Counties	County Boroughs	Total
Grade One	3	7	10
Grade Two	16	23	39
Grade Three	10	15	25
Grade Four	7	9	16
Grade Five	3	4	7
Unknown	8	14	22
TOTAL	47	72	119
AVERAGE GRADE	2.77	2.66	2.70

The grades shown are for the level of competence generally described by the early inspectors whose opinions on children's officers were expressed in their reports. There were twelve instances in which there was no grade for the children's officer because they had left before the inspectors awarded a grade to them. There were inspectors working before then but their records were not kept. There were nine examples where there was no children's officer available at the time because some were working for two or more authorities and there are ten instances where no figures have been recorded.

3. 6 FIRST APPOINTMENTS AND DUAL APPOINTMENTS

The total of advertisements was less than the potential because several pairs, and one group of three authorities, made joint appointments. The following authorities were coupled in this way. Five subsequently appointed children's officers of their own:

Huntingdon with Peterborough
Leicestershire with Rutland
Worcestershire with Worcester
Eastbourne with Hastings
Barrow with Lancashire and Bootle
Kent with Canterbury
Staffordshire with Burton-on-Trent
City of London with Tower Hamlets

The last three pairs remained united throughout the following 23 years as did Bootle and Lancashire after Barrow separated from them.

3. 7 PLAYING THE FIELD

Hundreds of potential candidates pursued the advertisements for children's officers. Some, already employed in education departments of local authorities, anxiously awaited the decisions of their own authorities, debating meanwhile whether to insure against not being appointed at home by responding to earlier advertisements in other places. Then there were large numbers of ex-service men and women and workers in the United Nations' relief and rehabilitation organisations, accustomed to high responsibility in war, here or overseas, and now seeking permanent posts at similar levels at home. Some applied only for posts in their home towns, others fancied moving to rural counties and seaside towns. A hard core of diligent applicants scanned the weekly journals and studied the published minutes of local councils and made independent enquiries about the intentions of each authority whose choice had not yet been disclosed. Some of these applicants had two or more calls to interviews and faced the delicate choice of accepting the first post offered or holding out for a better

prospect later. A few old hands kept meeting each other on the interview circuit and others received a dozen or more polite rejections before securing even an interview. Within the staff of most authorities there were generally one or more aspirants for the post. Some of these, especially in the English boroughs, secured an appointment in their own or another authority. Many who were unsuccessful subsequently became subordinates of successful outside candidates.

3. 8 A TIGHT TIMETABLE

In 1946 the government announced the intention to break up the Poor Law and establish a separate child care service. An act in 1946 had provided for the appointment of a day upon which the new National Health Service would come into force and the government started the new service and ended the poor law on 5 July 1948. The new service also made local authority provision for the elderly, the homeless and the handicapped in a separate welfare services department or under the medical officer of health. A third measure was to provide for the new child care service. The packed legislative programme put off the passage of the Children Bill until June 1948.

3. 9 THE AUTHORITIES' RESPONSES

Local authorities varied in their attitudes to the proposal. On the whole the councillors and officers connected with education thought that the child care service could well be done by the education service. Public assistance committees and officers were less well placed. The demand for the break up of the Poor Law reached its culmination in July 1948. The children of war pensioners were cared for separately to avoid the implication that the children of those who lost their lives during the war should be looked after by the Poor Law. Public confidence had been shaken by some revelations of the Curtis

Committee but individual authorities tended to think that the deficiencies described did not apply to their own services but might well have done so in the services of other authorities. Most local authorities welcomed the proposition that public assistance committees should be replaced by welfare committees who would have responsibility for the care of the elderly and for other disadvantaged people, including those who were handicapped or homeless. The existing public assistance officers tended to see their future as officers of the new welfare services. There was little competition from them for the posts of children's officers. These new posts were advertised at salaries lower than those which the public assistance officers were already receiving. In Gateshead the newly appointed children's officer found, after some months, that the post of welfare officer in his own authority was vacant. He applied and was appointed to the post on a higher salary. Only two or three former public assistance officers or superintendents of children's residential homes were appointed as children's officers. Like most innovations, the child care service was born in travail. Many labour and conservative councils alike were proud of their existing services. On the other hand the 40 year campaign for the break up of the Poor Law attained some popularity in the heady era of 'reconstruction'. Orators of all parties had spoken eloquently during the war of the coming 'Era of the Common Man'. Those who now considered themselves to be the ruling classes saw the abolition of pauperism as a reward to the labouring classes for their comradeship and sacrifice during the war. Local authorities differed enormously in the speed and enthusiasm with which they implemented the changes. Mostly those who were closely identified with the Curtis concept of a separate children's committee and a separate children's officer showed any enthusiasm for the change. Councillors and other chief officers were reluctant to see the creation of a new department with a new chief officer. Salaries

offered, while being substantially better than those available to social workers in other posts, were near the bottom of the scale considered suitable for the head of a department. They broadly equated to those paid to the superintendent registrar of births and deaths or chief sanitary inspector.

3.10 A NEW SERVICE ESTABLISHED

Even before the terms of the new legislation were finalised, one or two local authorities had altered the structure of their child caring services in response to the Curtis concept. The question, 'who was the first children's officer in post?' has been canvassed and names mentioned include those of Mrs Menna Lloyd-Williams of Cheshire and Horace Irving of Lancashire. Both these officers took post on 5 July 1948, free to run a service which had for some time been autonomous in all but name. Horace Irving was appointed in Lancashire with the title 'children's officer' in 1944 before the terms of the Children Act were known. In other authorities there was resistance to change. A small authority attracted notice in the press by appointing a young woman social worker from outside the city. This was followed by a public debate in the council chamber as some members wanted to appoint a local person who had already given long service. In this instance the appointment was retained but the children's officer left after a year to become a child care officer elsewhere.

3.11 THE HOME SECRETARY'S CHOICE

Mr Chuter Ede, Home Secretary, was convinced of the importance of implementing Curtis' crucial recommendation that there should be a separate committee and a separate chief officer. This concept, born of the misery revealed by the Monckton and Curtis reports, was a solution appropriate to its time. Anything less radical would not have brought about the great surge of thoughtful provision

for deprived children which followed the 1948 act in some places. A mere section of child care, located in some other department, would have lacked an advocate in the inner counsels of finance, staffing and policy committees of local authorities. Such a section might have come at the end of the line when money for developments was being allocated.

3.12 SEPARATE DEPARTMENTS

Some children's departments such as in Kent, Somerset and Warwickshire were relegated to a subordinate status in the clerk's department, at first. The concept of a separate department had disadvantages. A department with a relatively small budget, a small staff and a relatively low paid chief officer had to struggle to keep up with its giant rivals. Very small departments were wasteful of resources since there were some functions within a department for which high levels of expertise were required however small the volume of work. The senior staff had to be Admirable Crichtons, competent in the fields of finance and administration. In practice the history of the small departments belies the suggestion that small departments necessarily had high unit costs. Many of the early children's officers offered a wide range of ability and expertise which would have justified their appointment to larger responsibilities. On the other hand, several children's officers in small departments showed themselves to be unfitted. One said to an inspector, "I'd just like to work on my own with a typewriter".

3.13 EFFECTS OF FRAGMENTATION

Another aspect of the new concept was not realised at first. This was that Curtis necessarily fragmented the service. For example, take a harassed mother looking after a senile grandparent and a number of disturbed children. The approach

of crisis in such a household could be signalled to any one of three local authority departments depending on the interests of the person making the report. If the elderly grandparent were identified as the problem it would be a matter for the welfare committee. If it were thought that the mother was on the verge of psychiatric breakdown it would be for the health committee. If the children were seen as being neglected it would be for the children's committee to act. It took 20 years for workers to acknowledge that separate child care services could only be a phase in the development of local authority personal social services. It took 23 years for the services to be integrated again. This is not to deny the benefit which the new services brought to many consumers. It was not only in children's departments that leaps forward were made. The same applied to some of the new welfare departments and to some concerned with community services. This was underlined in the confusion following re-integration in 1971. Services to individual groups where they had previously been of high standard tended to be temporarily impaired after 1971, not only in child care but also in the provision for people suffering from mental disabilities and for elderly people. The twenty-odd years of specialist departments contributed to the significant developments which occurred in all fields of local authority personal social services.

3.14 WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A CHILDREN'S OFFICER

Children's officers were relatively less well paid and had small budgets and staffs. In some places powerful lobbies, still smarting from defeat, opposed the new departments. In some instances new appointments were delayed in an attempt to defeat the statute. Officers in the third and fourth tiers of other departments might be receiving higher salaries than those proposed for the new children's officers. Some officers who already enjoyed the confidence of councillors and

senior officers found themselves transferred to subordinate posts in the new departments. In some instances the new children's officer found that these long-established officers, transferred to the new departments, experienced difficulty in transferring their confidence to a new and possibly younger head of a children's department.

3.15 A FEW ANECDOTES TO SET THE SCENE

Where a local authority managed approved schools, the new children's officer might have found that the head of the school had enjoyed a large measure of autonomy, answerable only to a committee of managers. The head sometimes received a higher salary than the children's officer and enjoyed further financial perquisites from being resident on the campus. In one authority an arrangement was made whereby the approved school continued to be managed by the education officer with the concurrence of the children's officer who had previously been a child care officer. Tension grew in some places with superintendents of complexes of children's homes, many of whom had enjoyed a large measure of autonomy under the public assistance committee. The children's officer for one small borough was provided with a chair and table in the office of the mace bearer and others were accommodated in places equally inappropriate. Some seeking office equipment were told they must make do with materials transferred from existing departments. Some authorities broadly applied the same principle to staff. The work was already being done therefore the existing staff could be transferred to the new children's department. The new children's officer was considered fortunate because the council was employing one more person to do the job which was previously accomplished without a children's officer. The first-appointed officer was dependent upon the recommendations of the chief officers as to whom should be transferred to the new service. Naturally existing

departments were concerned to maintain their own services. To transfer one's best staff to the new children's officer and to retain the mediocre would call for a high degree of unselfishness. Of other chief officers, Mrs Barbara Kahan, children's officer for Dudley, described the children's committee as being " ... packed with the chief constable, the education officer, the medical officer and the welfare officer all implying to the committee that they could do the job much better". Miss Doris Cowcher, the first children's officer for the Isle of Ely, found that the public assistance officer had sent a letter to the head of each children's home saying that all arrangements for the supply of goods and services had been cancelled with effect from midnight on 4 July and that future arrangements would be made by the children's officer. Not being classed as a chief officer had other frustrations. The chief constable might refer issues to the town clerk or medical officer on matters which should properly relate to the children's department. Officers lower in the hierarchy but with bigger salaries would be asked to attend mayoral functions when the children's officer was not. The children's officer's car was not allowed to park in the area reserved for councillors and chief officers. More serious was the absence of communication. Experience as an early children's officer was typical. In one authority, after an initial fifteen minute interview with the clerk, contact with him was mainly dependent upon the co-operation of a committee clerk and even written applications for interviews with the clerk produced no response. The committee clerk found offices for the department above a shop and arranged for the two rooms to be rented by the estates office and decorated by the borough engineer. Linoleum and curtains were ordered and gas fires and telephones installed without difficulty. The clerk was not successful in acquiring a place for the children's officer in the chamber at council meetings, only a seat just off the public gallery. At the request of the clerk the children's officer was obliged to wait

outside until the items relating to the children's committee were heard. The efficient principal administrative officer in the clerk's department never accepted that the council had a new department. In the council diary for 1949 the children's homes continued to be listed as being under the medical officer of health. When the finance committee called for a review of the laundry arrangements, a contribution to the joint report was not sought from the children's department and consequently the review was produced without a mention of laundry for the children's homes. The children's officer did not get a free telephone, calls made from home had to be separately listed and claimed. Finally, when a standard text book on local government was to be revised the council did not consult the children's officer and there was no mention of the children's department in the reply to the questionnaire. The book was published showing a blank in the column where other authorities showed their children's department. On one occasion separate arrangements were made to discuss the department's conduct including a discussion with home office inspectors without the children's officer being informed of the result. In spite of these mild hinderances the majority of those who remained in post were delighted with the increase in responsibility and the chance to do something for the most deprived children. Little hinderances like not being acknowledged in the council's year book were of small importance compared with the task children's officers had been invited to tackle.

3.16 THE MOOD OF THE MOMENT

The mood among the new children's officers was by no means depressed. Some were entering a career structure and assuming significant responsibilities for the first time, after an early start as main grade social workers with little hope of advancement. Others had experienced responsibility in the forces, civil

defence or in relief in Europe. They faced the prospect of diminished responsibility until this new opportunity arose. Others who had spent a lifetime in local government with little prospect of independent command were now free to run their own show. They received varying degrees of support from colleagues and employing authorities, but most savoured the wider scope envisaged by Curtis and made real by the Children Act. Many of the children's officers went to work on the morning of 5 July uncertain of their statutory powers. The Children Act had only received the Royal Assent on 30 June, a week before the new departments became operational. Some, new to local government, did not know how to find out if the bill had reached the statute book. There was no mistaking the fact that decisions had to be made immediately. Widows with grandchildren, who had previously been receiving public assistance, turned up in the offices wanting to know from where next week's benefit was coming. Police officers phoned seeking immediate custody of delinquent children. Matrons of nurseries phoned to say they were in quarantine and no more children could be admitted. Treasurers asked when the capital development programme for the year would be ready.

3.17 MUTUAL SUPPORT

Children's officers soon began to look for support from their opposite numbers in other local authorities. When a new and inexperienced officer was appointed, the opportunity was given to spend a week or so with a children's officer who had been in post slightly longer. In this way, one children's officer who had been a main grade psychiatric social worker until 31 March, received visits from a policeman and a grammar school teacher, each of whom spent a fortnight with him before going on to their own authorities. At these encounters there was talk of forming an association of children's officers for interchange and support. It

took some time for leaders to come forward and formulate plans. In March 1949, Mrs Lloyd-Williams wrote to all children's officers inviting them to meet at Chester.

3.18 THE FIRST GATHERING OF CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

On Saturday, 13 April 1949, 79 children's officers met in Chester. Apologies were received from a further 28 and this accounted for 107 officers out of a nominal total of 148 in England and Wales. The apparent shortfall of 41 was partly because some posts had not been filled and because several officers were too overwhelmed with work to reply. Eventually they all joined the association. Chester's council chamber was packed to hear Lt Col Basil Neild, KC, the MP for Chester, who wished the children's officers well and mentioned his own interest in the adoption of children. Ian Brown from Manchester was elected to the chair and Robert Irving, Lancashire, spoke on the association. Some members showed a degree of diffidence which was to prove untypical of subsequent meetings of the organisation. Others asked if the county councils and county boroughs would want separate associations. It was resolved that, "a Children's Officers' Association be formed", and a working committee of eight was appointed to draw up a constitution⁰⁰⁸. Each potential member paid thirty shillings to the newly appointed treasurer. Later in 1949 the members gathered in Middlesex Guildhall to adopt the constitution. The first annual conference of the association was held at Chester in the spring of 1950 and there is a record of the observations made by John Ross, the Undersecretary in charge of the Probation and Children's Departments. This was 'off the record' but is deposited in the archives of the British Association of Social Workers in the collection entitled 'Source Book for the History of the Association of Children's Officers', and may be consulted at the discretion of the honorary archivist. The collection also has

the original conference programme detailing the speakers and titles of their talks. Representatives met with the Home Office, the voluntary child care organisations, teachers of social work and with many other agencies. The association also submitted evidence to royal commissions and other bodies of inquiry. Good relationships were established with Mr Dacey, the secretary of the County Councils' Association which invited the children's officers to nominate representatives to serve as advisors to their organisation. Relationships with the Association of Municipal Corporations were different. An interview was sought with the secretary of the association, Sir George Godber, who wrote that his association did not deal with bodies of council employees, but only with elected representatives of councils, generally through their own clerks. In accordance with their practice, the Association of Municipal Corporations selected children's officers to advise their children's committees.

3.19 OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The children's officers naturally comprised a negligible proportion of the professional staff employed. By tradition, each type of local authority chief officer had an exclusive organisation to treat with government. By 1951 the field social workers had organised themselves into the Association of Child Care Officers. A little later, those engaged in the group care of children formed the Residential Child Care Association which became the Social Care Association. Close contacts were maintained between these three organisations and with the National Association of Approved School Headteachers and Matrons. Regular meetings of these four bodies constituted the Joint Consultative Committee in Child Care which continued whilst children's departments existed. Several children's officers also joined the Association of Child Care Officers and the Residential Child Care Association and participated in their activities.

3.20 PUBLISHED RECORDS OF THE BEGINNINGS IN THREE AUTHORITIES

The opening years of children's committees in three widely contrasting authorities were chronicled and published. This got them away from anonymity to discuss happenings which can be positively recorded. The first report described the two years preceding 31 December 1950 in Kent. The second and subsequent reports were produced annually in Gloucestershire for the years 1948 to 1957. At the end of those ten years a further report summed up the whole period. The third account is a report on the first eighteen months in Dudley. Kent was the third largest child care authority in England with about 2,000 children in care and Dudley was one of the smallest, with fewer than 100 children. Gloucester was medium-sized with about 250 children. The draft of extracts made for this study was submitted to the three former children's officers and each of them replied with explanatory observations of which account has been taken.

3.21 KENT'S FIRST EXPERIENCES

Kent found it easy to set up a new committee but hard to set up a new department. On 18 February 1948, the council set up the children's committee. Interim arrangements for the new department were made by staff of the public assistance department under John Moss, welfare officer, who had been a member of the Curtis Committee. The children's officer, Elizabeth Harvie, took up her appointment on 1 December 1948 and 'the children's division' of the clerk's office started work on 1 January 1949. Previously the council's functions under Section 39 of the Children Act had been discharged by the predecessor departments of education, health and public assistance. The public assistance department had been renamed 'residential services department'. Nine members

of the staff of the former public assistance department were transferred to Miss Harvie on 1 January 1949 when she took over the child care responsibilities of the residential services department. From that date she administered twelve residential establishments. The county council was informed:

"The newly formed Division started its existence with the great advantage of being part of the County Clerk's office: nearly every application that was received at this time presented legal problems which needed full discussion with those experienced in law ..."

Then a phased series of transfers of responsibility began and the 'children's division' was recognised as a separate department in 1950. There was no obligation on the council to set up a children's department, only to have a separate children's committee and to appoint a children's officer. On 1 April 1949 the officers of the education committee were transferred to the children's division with responsibility for supervising boarded-out children. On 1 April 1949 the administration of two remand homes and four short-stay residential nurseries was transferred to the children's division. On 1 January 1950 responsibility for court and adoption work was transferred from the education department. In June 1949, the children's committee set up two main sub-committees, one for children's homes and the other for boarding-out and general purposes. In that month all the child care duties were transferred and the department's staff at county hall, headed by the children's officer and her deputy comprised:

- 1 senior welfare officer on APT Grade IV
- 3 social workers for admissions and casework on APT Grade I
- 5 administrative assistants on APT Grades III or IV
- 25 clerical and general division officers

In the county's eleven areas were 22 welfare officers including three men who covered the county to supervise older boys, dealt with court cases and obtained parental contributions. A clerical assistant was appointed to each area office between December 1949 and June 1950 and separate accommodation was secured for

most areas by April 1950. From the start all social workers had cars or car allowances. In the first few years Kent experienced severe pressure upon their residential provision which consequently became overcrowded. In the department's first two years, eleven small children's homes and three residential nurseries were opened and four nurseries were closed. In some instances the staff moved with the children. At Broadstairs a couple took in a family of six children who had been committed to care and two other foster children. The children's committee took it over as a 'scattered home' with the woman occupant as housemother. An education committee hostel for the reception of committed children was taken over as an 'adjustment' hostel for disturbed children. An establishment was bought from the National Children's Home and used initially as an intermediate home and subsequently as a reception centre. A girls' home was leased from a voluntary committee and another property was acquired by compulsory purchase after a public inquiry. From 1949, boys aged two to twelve and girls aged two to fifteen came directly from home or court to the Caldecott Community at Mersham, through the Kent children's department and generally stayed for about three weeks. They were observed by the staff, examined by a physician and a psychiatrist and tested by a psychologist. A case conference then recommended a plan for each child. In 1951 the experiment ended and the county opened its own reception centre. At the end of 1950 the committee had six nurseries caring for 166 children under five and fourteen homes caring for 525 school children. In addition there were two remand homes and there was access to 32 places for children in hospital premises. Nine of the establishments, caring for 245 of the children, had the same people in charge at the end of 1950 as there had been at the beginning of 1949. The necessarily feverish changes in the other establishments, providing for the remaining children, were not untypical of group child care in the years immediately

following the Children Act. Kent's report concluded:

"With a firm and reasoned policy emanating from county hall, linked with intimate local interest ... sober optimism for the department is justified and we hopefully anticipate that the children in our care will be given the background they need."

3.22 GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S EARLY PERFORMANCE

The ten annual reports produced by Gloucestershire covered the period from 1949 to 1959. This authority appointed Ann Medley to be children's officer after she had discontinued medical training to join the Women's Army Corps in the war, first driving trucks as a private soldier to be finally demobilised as a commissioned officer. She was appointed in March 1948 and took up her post in May. Miss Medley brought to her department many of the concepts she had learned from the army, providing herself with labels headed 'ACTION - THIS DAY' to attach to urgent instructions. Her annual report for the first year, ending on 6 July 1949, was signed in September 1949 and similar reports were issued for each of the nine subsequent years at the end of which she published her 'Review of the First Ten Years'. She was probably the first children's officer to publish an annual report which seemed free from sentimentality and idealism, describing in detail the small change of a smoothly-oiled department in which morale was high and equal emphasis was laid upon the role of the children's committee members, of the staff and of the children. The report published the names of all the field and office staff, with dates of their appointment and salary grade, together with a record of qualifications and honours gained. Gloucestershire was one of the few authorities which published a detailed analysis of the numbers of children in each mode of care and supervision on 5 July 1948, when responsibility for them was transferred. The county was not exceptional in showing a large increase in numbers in care, from 358 to 465, in the very first year. The total of children in care or under

supervision was 547 in 1948 and 699 a year later. Occasional snippets of information from other authorities suggest that the implementation of the Children Act was followed by increased numbers in care practically everywhere. Some of these apparent increases were due to administrative changes. For example, many former evacuees were received into care and some children who were living with relatives and dependent on out-relief from the Poor Law on 5 July, had to be received into care and boarded-out with their relatives who then received a boarding-out allowance. Another factor was the new obligation to retain a child in care until the eighteenth birthday if their welfare so required. Previously some public assistance committees had discharged children from care when they became self-supporting unless parental rights were vested in the authority. At the end of the first year Gloucestershire showed that 51 children (11% of those in care) were 'in employment'. Of course not all of these would have been wholly self-supporting. It is interesting that Gloucestershire counted children committed to the care of the managers of their approved schools among the numbers of 'children received into care', a rare interpretation of the statistics required. Miss Medley defined the scope of the duties of the children's committee as being:

" ... responsible for the local oversight of all 'deprived' children in the area, ie, all children under 18 without parents or guardians or whose parents are unable, temporarily or permanently, to care for them for diverse reasons."

She also cited the duty to protect children placed for adoption or privately with foster parents and the duties under the 1933 act in connection with juvenile courts, remand homes and approved schools. Her reports then described the arrangements whereby the department's three child care officers divided between them a service to over 500 children in a county measuring 45 miles from northeast to southwest. The report listed the precise amounts of clothing, pocket money and other allowances made for foster children of varying ages. A large section

described the numbers and titles of staff in each home or nursery, and the names of those in charge together with the amount paid by residential staff for board and lodging of their own children. In mentioning so many councillors and staff by name she showed a fine appreciation of the value which people tended to place upon public recognition. No doubt this contributed to the high morale which seems to have characterised Gloucestershire's committee and workers. The final section of the first report referred to plans outlined in Home Office Circular No 128. This circular was distributed on 5 July 1949, the last day of the period to which this report related. Gloucestershire's promptitude may have been unique in this aspect. Developments reported in the second year include the appointment of a male boarding-out officer, arrangements for parents to pay contributions directly to a home or nursery and the appointment of a debt collector to recover the arrears of parental contributions. Under the heading, 'Educationally Sub-Normal and Mentally Deficient Children in Homes and Nurseries', the children's officer expressed satisfaction that:

" ... the health and education committees have arranged for a large percentage of these children to be sent to the appropriate residential establishments."

Included among eighteen such children were five certified as mentally defective, three ascertained as being in need of special educational treatment and one who was sent to a colony for sufferers of epilepsy. This report was already canvassing the need to help parents whose children were in danger of neglect in their own homes. Subsequently this need became widely recognised under the title 'Prevention'. The third annual report mentioned, for the first time, the use of advertisements seeking foster homes for particular children; the boarding-out of brothers and sisters in the same village; two foster mothers who each took four or five children presenting exceptional behaviour and the completion of the first year's work of the newly-established reception home where six children

had " ... remained as semi-permanent members of the reception centre". A special sub-committee looked into the costs of homes and nurseries and made recommendations to reduce expenditure on food and laundry. The authority's senior approved school, with twenty girls and five resident staff, reported eight months during which no child ran away although six girls were employed on casual work in the town at different times. It was rare for more than one girl to be granted home leave at the same time as another unless two girls were going in opposite directions. The fourth annual report observed that some older children had been in residential care for the greater part of their lives. It was hoped to board-out these children before they reached school leaving age to avoid a double break at that time. A few girls continued in residential care after leaving school until they were deemed " ... to be sufficiently stabilised to adjust themselves to a normal life in the community". The report noted that many cases of children being removed from home had been prevented by the Home Help Service. The appointment of an additional field worker facilitated closer investigation of applications for reception and earlier restoration to parental care. There was mention of six boarded-out children selected for grammar schooling and of four girls who were studying domestic science and two more taking commercial courses. Following the closure of a residential nursery, a panel of ten short-stay foster mothers were paid thirty-five shillings a week for each child in their care. At least fifteen children in the authority's care had gone home for a trial period. From 1950 the children's officer arranged an annual day conference which was attended by members and staff of the children's committee together with representatives from other statutory and voluntary agencies, attracting speakers of national standing. A rare observation on the philosophy of child care was made in paragraph 22 of the report concerning:

" ... the increased number of recommendations, from the child guidance clinic and others, for children to be taken into care on

account of unhappy home circumstances due entirely to the attitude of the stepfathers concerned. It does appear that some stepfathers now realise that they are no longer legally bound to maintain their stepchildren and they seem to ignore their moral obligations. In all cases ... there has been a strong bond of affection between the child and his mother."

The report commented that two or three children had been deprived of their home by reception into care because their stepfathers had made life intolerable for them. The report for 1956-1957 observed that foster parents were now generally willing to receive visits from parents and to envisage the child's return home. This change from 'near-adoption relationships', formerly prevalent, was attributed to television and radio programmes and to the influence of the authority's staff. The register of 22 short-stay foster mothers was a great success but it was noted:

" ... if a mother is definite that she would prefer her child to go to a county home or nursery rather than a foster home her wishes are respected."

In her 'Review of the First Ten Years', the children's officer noted the reduction of places in children's homes from 143 to 87 and in residential nurseries from 91 to 63. Furthermore, there were now vacant places - older children could stay on in the nurseries and attend primary school. Apart from the reception home and the short-stay home there were three long-stay homes. One of these was called 'a small family home' for a family of brothers and sisters, who were unlikely to return to their parents, being looked after by a married couple, the husband earning his living as a teacher. Unhappily, paragraph 10 of the 1957-1958 report showed that these children had four different sets of people in charge of the home between August 1956 and April 1958. The fourth couple stayed for several years. In 1957 a family social worker was appointed to the authority, 'as an experiment'. In her first year she assisted 178 children from 44 families. Of these:

" ... only one family of four children was committed to care, both

parents being mentally subnormal. This family was evicted for non-payment of rent and sent to part III accommodation. The husband was a cripple and found it difficult to obtain employment and the wife was of such low intelligence that, in order to save the children from suffering, it was necessary for the NSPCC to intervene and prosecute the parents for neglect.

"Twelve families have been rehabilitated, nine co-operated until debts were paid, five were found to be unsuitable through mental illness. It is far too early to suggest any specific reason for this decline (in the number of children in care) it cannot but be suspected that the decrease is bound to be, at any rate in a small way, related to the appointment 15 months ago, of a full-time family social worker."

The usually unspoken suspicion that that the new child care service tended to diminish the willingness of parents, relatives and neighbours to care for children in emergency, was publicly voiced in the report for 1949-1950, under the heading 'Difficulties':

"Lessening of parental responsibility: Demands for 'short-stay accommodation are still numerous - less and less effort seems to be made by parents to help themselves. While it is remembered that the housing shortage and consequent overcrowding often prevents neighbours from assisting one another, nevertheless the growing tendency whereby many parents regard it as a duty of the local authority to provide temporary accommodation for their children in an emergency, when they themselves have made little or no effort to make their own arrangements, is a most distressing and alarming feature of present day society. Again, parents are often slow to claim their children taken into care, even after the emergency on account of which the children were admitted has ceased. This involves extra visits by the boarding-out officers who should be engaged on more necessary work."

The children's officer went on to speak of 'Rehabilitation of Problem Families' as being almost impossible with the limited staff available. In 1955, she returned to the topic of parental responsibility:

" ... today there is no deterrent by which a feckless mother can be prevented from leaving a young family ... Under the present law no action is possible against a mother who deserted her husband and children and in one or two cases mothers of young children have not only deserted them but have themselves remained in the vicinity leading irresponsible lives while the County Council cared for their children."

Gloucestershire displayed competence and a remarkable degree of efficiency on traditional lines.

3.23 DUDLEY : HIGH PRODUCTIVITY IN A VERY SMALL DEPARTMENT

A contrasting and even more remarkable account of the start of a children's department was told by the first children's officer for Dudley, a small authority in Worcestershire some thirty miles north of Gloucestershire. This authority had 72 children in its care when Barbara Langridge (later to become Barbara Kahan) transferred from the factory inspectorate to take up the duties of children's officer on 4 August 1948. In its opening pages, the report gets to grips with the reality of the children's experiences. Towards the end the reader learns something of the stress imposed on staff during the early years. These extracts and summaries appear in the order in which they are published in the report:

'Connection of Care with other Social Problems'. Four children between eleven months and nine years were deserted without warning by a mother who knew that she was likely to be arrested for theft. From that time until she completed her twelve month sentence, the children did not see her again. The baby, who because of the parents' refusal to consider adoption, was accommodated in a nursery, suffered very considerably from the lack of individual attention and emotional warmth so essential to a baby's progress, and for months literally pined. The oldest boy, well able to grasp the situation, was bitterly resentful against his mother for leaving them ... and did not succeed in a foster home because his father deliberately encouraged a feeling of hostility towards those who were trying to look after him. Of the other two children, one had to remain for a time in unsuitable conditions with her father and the other was fostered with a kindly, homely family where she was happy and largely forgot her own parents. She had to be placed in a foster home because there was not room for her to remain in a children's home, but difficulties arose when her mother completed her prison sentence. The child had become part of her foster family and did not want to leave them, nor did her foster parents wish to part with her but the natural parents would not agree to adoption. This situation will continue to arise while shortage of institutional accommodation leaves fostering as the only alternative in such cases."

Miss Langridge observed that there was still a stigma attached to illegitimacy: although the family of an unmarried mother might tolerate her in their home they might not accept the child. If the child came into care there were few private people willing to take a foster child to whose adoption by them the mother would

not agree. The alternative to fostering was a nursery where:

" ... the child will not receive the individual love and care he needs unless there are lavish staffing arrangements, so that the nurse can genuinely act as substitute mother".

There was a shortage of vacancies for the under fives which made it impossible to receive into care any but the most urgent cases. The council assumed parental rights in respect of a family of eight whose mother was in prison.

"Lack of accommodation in children's homes made it impossible for them to be accommodated together and it was felt in any case that separation from each other and from their parents would cause them unnecessary emotional suffering because, in spite of bad material conditions, the marital relationship was good. These children were returned to their parents under supervision. Assumption by the council of parental rights ensured close supervision and power to remove the children from home if necessary. The mother was encouraged by escorted visits to take advantage of social and health services, the family budget was supervised to see that rent and hire purchase arrears were paid and the father was encouraged to try and brighten his own home. It was hoped to rehouse the family elsewhere in the town where the boys, who had been before the juvenile court, could make a fresh start. A most positive factor was the real friendship formed between the family and the social worker, on lines already developed by the family service units. The children's committee had already saved between £800 and £1,000 in eighteen months under the 'practical and economical experiment'. Had a trained worker concentrated on this family alone, and done no other work, there would still have been a financial saving. The positive human result would be a raising of standards of upbringing without the deprivation of children by separation from parental care and from each other."

In eighteen months much short-term boarding-out had been developed, using over fifty foster homes. The children's officer was critical of this arrangement. The dangers of fostering immediately after coming into care were apparent. The officer placing the child had no time to get to know him, his history, health record, intelligence level or personal peculiarities. It was not surprising that some children did not settle down in foster homes used in place of reception homes. Foster homes which might have been useful with careful preparation were permanently lost through the first unfortunate experience.

"Very few even highly self-controlled, well-mannered adults would find it easy to eat, sleep and live with people whom they have only

met once or twice. How much less can a child, deprived of all familiar contacts, sights, customs etc, be expected to settle down at once in similar circumstances."

The children's officer looked forward to having sufficient institutional accommodation of all kinds so that all children could be studied carefully and slowly introduced to their new life. An advertisement for a foster home for two specific children attracted 70 applications of which about seven were used. The report described the successful fostering of a severely handicapped three-year-old boy who wept at the sight of strangers, suffered from night terrors and had a distended abdomen and legs too weak to carry him. He never spoke except to say his name. After a year with a childless middle-aged couple he had overcome all these disabilities. A number of children had come into care above the school leaving age (at that time 15 years of age) and had experienced more than ten changes in as many months because of the shortage of adequate and suitable accommodation. Sometimes they could only be fixed up in bed and breakfast lodgings, having to wander about or sit in the department's office in the morning and having money doled out daily for cafe meals and admission to cinemas. The officer dealing with four of these children spent a quarter of her working time on them alone. The department acted as a post office when it was not desirable for parents to know their children's addresses. 'The new attitude to child care ... ' required gradual rehabilitation rather than permanent separation. For those with no near relatives there was an 'uncle and aunt scheme' and, on Boxing Day 1948, every Dudley child in the (Wolverhampton) cottage homes went out to a private family in or near Dudley. On the other hand, group outings for Dudley children had to be discontinued because the committee claimed that some of the Wolverhampton children felt neglected, since the other authorities did not organise similar 'treats'. The children's officer pleaded successfully for flexibility in fixing boarding-out allowances and clothing

allowances to take account of individual needs:

" ... a girl's overcoat can absorb nearly half of the amount allowed for a boarding-out outfit. Shoes are another expensive item if they are to be of any lasting value".

At Christmas 1948, every one of the 70 children received a personally chosen present sent by post with a handwritten letter from the children's officer.

"Correspondence with the children has grown and their letters are always answered as soon as possible. These letters, although they are simple, mean a lot to the children and are often carried around for months."

A new year party, held in January 1949 for foster families, formed a useful meeting place for brothers and sisters who, in some cases, had not seen each other for years.

" ... the staff of the children's department have got to know and make friends with the children in their care. The office itself is as informal a place as possible, where children can sit and talk, meet friends and even have scratch meals in an emergency".

One eight-year-old boy, committed to care as beyond parental control and awaiting a place in a special boarding school, could not be contained in a children's home. For nearly ten weeks a member of the department fetched and escorted him from his home to school and back, administered prescribed medicines twice daily, searched him at the end of each day and returned to their owners anything he had stolen. The equivalent of one working day a week was spent on this boy alone:

" ... a warm friendship had grown out of the day-to-day supervision.

"Some families whose children are as much in need of care as many of those under legal supervision have been assisted in their own homes. Even if no material help has been arranged, constructive advice has occasionally helped and sometimes the emotional relief of a good cry or a friendly chat has eased a difficult situation at least temporarily."

Miss Langridge's account of her months in office is the more remarkable when a study of the paragraphs relating to the department's staff reveal that she

started work on 4 August 1948 with no staff. Fixing the staff establishment was to be left until experience showed what was needed. For the first four months part-time clerical and typing duties were executed by the welfare department and some visiting was undertaken by officers of that department and by education welfare officers. Eventually a man and a woman were appointed, one from the family service units and the other directly from a university child care course. During the first year the children's officer appears to have launched her imaginative programme virtually single-handed, with some help from persons appointed as temporary boarding-out officers. The children's officer estimated that 1,500 visits a year were required simply to satisfy the boarding-out regulations and another 4,500 visits on preventive and allied work. In the first eighteen months she also conducted over 1,000 interviews in the office so that callers could talk out their troubles. At the end of the eighteen months covered by the report the department was fully staffed with qualified people and a system of weekly reports enabled:

" ... an accurate record to be made of every hour of each day, every mile travelled, every visit made and interview given, important telephone calls and other information".

Visits were classified according to their purpose and work done out of office hours was shown separately on the summary of the week's work. This enabled an analysis of work to be made from the outset, providing evidence of the weighting which might be attached to various kinds of work, the times of day at which it had to be done and the resources needed to do it. The committee planned to establish various types of accommodation but, at the time under review, there was none and the department depended upon voluntary organisations and limited places in a neighbouring authority's establishments. This meant that the children had to be fed, clothed and minded in the office, calling for:

" ... a great measure of flexibility and good humour on the part of all concerned".

It is doubtful if any other children's officer could claim such sensitive and understanding work, so energetically provided, in the early years. Many of the features recorded here were not adopted in most children's departments until many years later. Some had not achieved anything like this measure of individual concern for children by the time their departments ceased in 1971. After her marriage to child psychiatrist Dr Vladimir Kahan, Miss Langridge served successively as county children's officer for Oxfordshire, deputy chief inspector in the Home Office, assistant chief social work advisor in the Department of Health and Social Security and as director of The Child Care Learning Project, formerly the Gatsby Project.

C H A P T E R F O U R

COLLECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE DATA

"Local authorities should have the immediate
responsibility for the care of the children."

The Curtis Report
Paragraphs 430 - 432

4. 1 OBJECTIVES

As indicated in the introduction, in the main this thesis relates the performance of children's departments as assessed by the Home Office inspectors in their periodic reviews. The anonymity of every authority and of each person described is preserved except when published material is quoted. The inspectors' reports are not evenly spread over the 23 years. The earliest reports related to 1953. Not every authority was reported upon in that year. Internal evidence shows that reports were made earlier but not preserved. Reports for provincial authorities tail off in the second half of the nineteen-sixties owing to the radical developments in some places because following implementation of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the inspectors' attention was diverted by preparations for reorganisation of London government in 1965; the run-up to more changes effected by the 1969 act and preparations to take child care into the new social services department in 1971, when reorganisation took effect in the provinces. The files which were preserved relate to a period of relative stability.

4. 2 MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Application of the discipline of numbers to the performance of children's

departments have previously been made, for example by Dr Jean Packman in 'Child Care : Needs and Numbers' ³⁰⁵. In the light of this study some generalisations among practitioners do not bear examination. For example, 'the percentage of children boarded-out', published by central government implies progress but it is a poor measure of a department's use of prolonged group residential care or its capacity to find and sustain long-term foster homes. An exceptionally high 'boarding-out percentage' may be recorded by an authority which, in comparison with others, also has above the average number of children retained in long stay group care. Other judgements based on the proportion of children in care in relation to the child population are also of little significance as indicators of social work skill, because the means of measuring socio-economic conditions are imperfect. The unreliability of comparative statistics was stressed by Barbara Kahan in her presidential address to the Association of Children's Officers in 1964 ²⁶¹. Particularly misleading are attempts to measure the proportion of applications leading to reception of children into care. That depends upon what counts as an application.

4. 3 SUBJECTIVITY

The subjective nature of the material studied is acknowledged. We can count the number of new foster homes but that will not tell us whether the move of a child into a particular foster home was for better or for worse. We can record how often an authority made use of reception facilities but that will not show whether those facilities were used effectively. We can see if the boarding-out regulations were complied with but compliance alone does not guarantee the welfare of a boarded-out child.

4. 4 EXISTING PRACTICES ACCEPTED

Some practices and standards have secured acceptance as broadly desirable. That children tend to benefit on the whole when the ratio of staff to children in a children's home is, within reason increased; when the staff are helped to see the importance of maintaining contact with parents; when regular reviews are carried out and when residential and field staff tend to stay in the same post for a long time. These were things the inspectors looked for and reported upon. Their reports give some measure of the effectiveness of a department. There will be marginal differences in judgments of the performance of departments. No two inspectors will comment on precisely the same things, nor give precisely the same degree of commendation or criticism. Fashions change, for example, a degree of superficial smartness of appearance which was commendable in the turn-out of a child in the early nineteen-fifties would be cruel regimentation in the be-jeaned eighties and nineties.

4. 5 SELECTION OF ELEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

The inspectors' reports showed a wide variety of aspects to which they directed attention. A list of topics under 22 headings, each with sub-headings, was first prepared. A more extensive study showed that only a small number of these 22 elements was regularly featured in the reports. Some elements, which now seem crucial, were often omitted from consideration in the nineteen-fifties. The criteria was then reduced to include only those headings under which the inspectors' opinion of each authority was likely to be recorded. Rarely mentioned topics had to be excluded and comprised topics to which some signatories of the Curtis Report attached great importance. For example, matching the religious denomination of foster parents with that of the boarded-out child. Other topics which have recently been seen as important such as the

assumption by an authority of parental rights, were not reported upon often enough to provide an adequate sample. There remained less than a dozen significant topics which inspectors were fairly likely to record. Two elements which were nearly always reported upon were the effectiveness of the children's officer and the effectiveness of compliance with Sub-Section 13(1)[a] of the act, stipulating boarding-out as the favoured mode of care. In the reports this topic was generally discussed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The degree of an authority's compliance with the boarding-out regulations was seen by inspectors as some guide to quality. A feature which was assessed often, but not always, was the constitution and, less often, the effectiveness of the children's committee. Elements which were reported upon more often than not were:

- 1 Determining need for reception into care
- 2 Keeping children in touch with their parents
- 3 Keeping brothers and sisters in care in touch with each other
- 4 Separate reception facilities
- 5 Short-stay boarding-out
- 6 Reviews of the welfare, health, conduct and progress of boarded-out children

The adequacy of the staff establishment was often mentioned. Two important features were often omitted. These were:

- 1 Reviews of children in group residential care
- 2 Arrangements for the staff's professional development and training

There was no obligation with respect to reviewing children in other modes of care until the act of 1969. Many departments had begun reviewing children in residential group care soon after the beginning, but others did not until much later and some not until it became compulsory. A guide, issued by the chief inspector in 1964, requested inspectors to report on reviews in children's homes

and nurseries ²¹¹. The guide also requested inspectors to include a description of the department's training and recruitment of staff and students. In the end it was left out of the calculations because the evidence was so sparse.

4. 6 THE ELEMENTS SELECTED FOR EVALUATION

The following headings were finally selected to be marked on a five-point scale.

Chapter 5 The constitution and effectiveness of the children's committee

Chapter 6 The suitability and effectiveness of the children's officer

Chapter 7 The effectiveness of procedures for deciding when it was in a child's interests to be admitted to care

Chapter 8 The effectiveness of separate facilities for reception and observation under Sub-Section 15(2) 1949 act

Chapter 9 The degree of commitment and effectiveness in keeping children in touch with their families

Chapter 10 The degree of commitment and effectiveness in keeping brothers and sisters in touch with each other

Chapter 11 The regularity and quality of reviews of welfare, health, conduct and progress of boarded-out children

Chapter 12 The degree of commitment to boarding-out in compliance with Sub-Section 13(1)[a] 1948 act

Chapter 13 The adequate provision of field staff

Chapter 14 Casework and recording

The performance of each authority was judged by adding together the number of marks assessed for each grade. An authority which was awarded five marks on the scale for each of the ten elements would have had an aggregate of 50 marks. An authority which scored no more than one mark because it was consistently weak in every one of the elements would score no more than ten marks. In

practice the number of marks scored by any single authority ranged from 45 down to 20. The number of children in the care of each authority was converted from the original form, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, to a different form, +2, +1, 0, -1, -2, by deducting 3 from each authority's score. This defines more clearly the difference between fairly good and fairly bad authorities.

4. 7 THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE

The number of children in care of a local authority on 31 March 1964 was used to measure the comparative size of local authorities' responsibilities. This is an imperfect measure but the best we have. Of course children's departments had many more responsibilities than looking after children in their direct care. The number of children in care is determined not only by the number of children at risk and by the socio-economic circumstances of the population, but also by marked variation in policy of individual authorities towards reception and retention of children in care. The most unexpected of these variations are illustrated by comparing these two pairs of unexpectedly marked differences.

TABLE 4.7.1

**Number of Children in Care per Thousand Child Population
England : March 1964**

Bournemouth	10.6
Essex	3.1
Oxfordshire	8.9
Lancashire	2.7

The weakness in using numbers in care as a measure of responsibility has been acknowledged, however it does provide an indicator against which to compare performance. To preserve anonymity, authorities have been arranged in groups of ten according to numbers in care.

TABLE 4.7.2**Authorities' Scores According to Numbers in Care
England : March 1964**

		Average
10 authorities each with fewer than	81 children	minus 1.4
10 authorities each with between	82 - 105 children	minus 1.4
10 authorities each with between	107 - 127 children	minus 0.7
10 authorities each with between	128 - 156 children	minus 2.7
10 authorities each with between	157 - 188 children	minus 2.8
10 authorities each with between	189 - 224 children	minus 3.7
10 authorities each with between	234 - 298 children	minus 1.7
10 authorities each with between	305 - 384 children	plus 0.1
10 authorities each with between	410 - 521 children	minus 3.3
10 authorities each with between	532 - 610 children	minus 0.3
10 authorities each with between	690 - 818 children	minus 0.3
10 authorities each with between	836 - 1673 children	minus 1.2
5 authorities each with between	1761 - 9421 children	minus 4.2

The conclusion must be that there is no discernible pattern of difference between the level of performance of authorities of different sizes. Dr Packman reached differently based conclusions which demonstrated there was a tendency to show rather poorer results in the small county boroughs ³⁰⁵. However, the possible deficiencies of very small children's departments are no longer of concern. The reorganisation of local government outside Greater London in 1971 has enlarged the number of children for which individual authorities have care. While the very largest provincial cities remain virtually unchanged, the other county boroughs have either been incorporated with the shire counties in which they were situated or else two or more have been joined together to make larger shire district council areas. These two carry the child care responsibilities in the provinces. All local authorities with child care responsibilities can now appoint top management at no lower levels of salary than those enjoyed by their opposite numbers in the professions of accountancy, education, law and engineering. There is a vital point made in the Curtis Report that there should be a person to which the child would look as guardian. This can no longer be the director of social

services who has so many other responsibilities. In paragraph 443 Curtis went on to say something as true now as it was in 1946:

"To be properly exercised, the responsibility must be delegated to an individual, and that individual one whose training has fitted her for child care and whose whole attention is given to it."

The existence of authorities with an exceptionally large number of children in their care continues in about seven large cities and ten large counties. In the shire counties the child care was very substantially increased and the greater part have the added burdens associated with sparse populations and long distances from the administrative centres to peripheral communities. The problem in the big cities seems intractable, but it could well be that child care in the shire counties could now be transferred to the district councils.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMITTEES

"The purpose of committees is to remind the members what they already know but tend to forget."

Doctor Samuel Johnson

Quoted in an article in The Sunday Times 1989

5. 1 INTRODUCTION

Child care, like war, is too serious a matter to be left to the professionals. In England in the nineteen-eighties, over five thousand youngsters were removed annually from their homes, often against their own and their parents' wishes. Another 30,000 were received 'voluntarily' into the care of local authorities, often unwillingly and without the full agreement of parents who were missing, sick or under threat of more forceful intervention ²¹⁷.

5. 2 EARLIER EXPERIENCE

In 1812, a House of Commons committee reported on the powers of churchwardens and overseers to:

" ... punish by distinction of diet, dress, confinement or corporal punishment the Poor committed to their care for misbehaviour, breach of rules or regulations of their own forming without the intervention of a magistrate; and also of detaining children and others in their custody, without such intervention".

In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act set up local elections by written ballot. Each parish chose a representative to serve on a board of guardians serving a union of parishes. This established the principle, continued to this day, that decisions about people in public care should be made by elected bodies. Jennings describes the union, usually grouped around a market town ²⁵⁵. A

pauper could usually walk there and back in a single day. It is contended in this chapter that the continued involvement of elected representatives in decisions concerning the public care of children away from their parents is to be welcomed.

5. 3 LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES : 1930 to 1948

By 1929 there was no need for separate boards of guardians, many of whom were also local councillors. The boards' officers were often also clerks, treasurers and medical officers to local authorities. Elections to both were often contested by the party machines. The Local Government Act 1929 abolished the unions and the boards of guardians and vested their functions in county and county borough councils. The government had to fit the existing poor law to their existing scheme. So the Poor Law Act 1930 received the Royal Assent on 20 March 1930, less than a fortnight before the local councils took over. Consolidation afforded no scope for major amendment. Section 15(1)[c] said the public assistance authorities were still:

" ... to set to work or put out as apprentices all children whose parents are not ... able to keep and maintain their children".

Despite this phrase and the continued use of the title 'guardians committees' in the counties, the Minister of Health, on the same day, made Public Assistance Order No 185/30, requiring that the management of any home should be exercised by a committee (Article 11) and that no child should be boarded-out except under the care of a boarding-out committee (Article 95). As Jennings observed:

"In a large county or county borough, it is quite impossible even for the (public assistance) committee to exercise all the numerous functions which the poor law gives to the council ... The guardians were in close touch with the people whom they relieved, and they knew both their needs and how far they could supply them without application to the poor law. It is quite inconceivable that a committee of a county council will be in the same position. Accordingly the actual administration of relief is in the hands of special sub-committees of the public assistance committee, called

'guardians committees' whose area and composition will be found in the administrative scheme."

Article 12 of Order 185/30 required the appointment of sub-committees of women to visit the children in homes and institutions and to inspect " ... the wards in which they are maintained". House committees were to check the stores without notice, to afford opportunities for inmates to complain and to interview, as far as practicable, each child admitted since the previous meeting. Article 89 required that "The Superintendent shall bring before the House Committee any child who expresses a wish to see them". There was no requirement to inform the children of their rights of audience but as late as 1948 the minutes of one county council record that newly-admitted children were being routinely interviewed by a house committee ¹⁰¹. Article 114 required boarding-out committees to appoint a woman member or officer to visit each boarded-out child and his home every six weeks and report in writing. The 1930 Poor Law Code was superseded in 1946 by the Public Assistance (Boarding Out) Order which continued the visiting provisions. Rule 20 provided, for the first time, for the committee to review the progress of a foster child at regular intervals and record their consideration in writing.

5. 4 CHILDREN IN TROUBLE

In 1933 the Children and Young Persons Act extended the powers and duties of local education authorities to look after children committed to their care as 'fit persons' by the courts and empowered the Home Secretary to make boarding-out rules. Up to 1948 the counties and county boroughs therefore cared for two categories of children away from their parents; those committed to care by the courts, looked after by education committees, and those maintained under the poor law by public assistance authorities.

5. 5 A PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE : 1935 to 1948

Records show thirteen years of tension between the Ministry and a large rural county council. An inspection in 1935 of eighty children boarded-out and visited, sometimes irregularly, by women members of guardians committees, showed that some children needed dental attention. A boy of twelve slept in the same bed as his foster mother. A boy of fifteen had to call weekly at the Relief Office to get his allowance. The Ministry suggested the appointment of a salaried visitor to improve the boarding-out. The council replied that the health visitors would pay three-monthly visits to boarded-out children under school age but the rest of the work would continue to be done by committee members. Three years later inspectors found long intervals between the promised visits by health visitors and again suggested a fulltime officer.

5. 6 WAR INTERVENES

A year later war broke out and hundreds of children were billeted in the county under the supervision of their teachers and Ministry of Health welfare officers. In 1943 an inspector visited 34 boarded-out poor law children, unaffected by the evacuation scheme, and criticised eleven foster homes. One foster mother had not been visited for two years. However, the committee was satisfied with all but two of the foster homes. The child not visited for two years had been placed by another authority against advice. The General Inspector from Whitehall met the Public Assistance Committee and reported:

"We went at it hammer and tongs and much misinformed criticism had to be dealt with. It was touch and go all the time, but in the end the committee approved the appointment of a boarding-out visitor ... I have told the Public Assistance Officer that to reply to the expert criticism of a Ministry Inspector, the amateur views of the local committee is not good enough."

The extent of the General Inspector's expertise in social psychology may be judged from this extract from his report:

"So far, with one exception, they ... have been lucky in selecting their foster homes, but I put this down largely to the fact that people in this county are notoriously kind to children ... "

The Public Assistance Officer introduced 'the Lady Welfare Officers' to the boarding-out committees in a carefully worded letter:

"Visiting has been done for years by members of the Guardians Committees and has proved very satisfactory ... Ministry have pressed for more boarding-out ... burden too great for Voluntary Visitors ... whose work will be augmented by Lady Welfare Officers of the Education Committee visiting alternately with the local visitor ... the first visit in the company of the Voluntary Visitor ... these Welfare Visitors do not supersede the local visitors, but will simply pay additional official visits ... In writing this ... hope to start without misunderstandings ... sincerely appeal to all members ... to assist by informing Foster Parents ... and persuading them to see the benefits of the visits by Welfare Workers and receive them in a helpful attitude. If this action is taken it will help enormously. Believe me. Yours sincerely (signed) Public Assistance Officer."

By 1945 all the boarded-out children in the county were supposed to be meeting alternately with paid visitors. They submitted reports but had no authority to act and did not know the results of their recommendations. They had been introduced to foster parents by the voluntary visitors who had been courteous and helpful, although the committees did not approve of the new appointments. In 1947 an inspector found that the boarding-out officers could not consult the files or know when voluntary visitors had reported except by going to the office in the county town. They could only visit a foster child when asked by the public assistance officer. The foster mothers were not pleased, accepting the extra visits as another eccentricity, sometimes playing off one visitor against another. Committee members supposed that paid officers were needed in some other counties where the voluntary visiting wasn't so good as their own.

5. 7 DETAILED COMMITTEE WORK IN THE LARGEST AUTHORITY

Before 1948 even the London County Council took some decisions about individual children to a sub-committee. In March 1948 the London County Council's Special

Education Sub-Committee received reports recommending payment of £25 for a trumpet for a very talented boy and confirmed the chair's consent to the apprenticeship of a boy as a shopfitter and another boy's going on a school trip to Paris. They resolved to pay one shilling (5p) weekly for each girl in the remand home to visit a hairdresser.

5. 8 VARYING VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF COMMITTEES IN STATUTORY SERVICES

The lowest point of committee responsibility was resolved in practice by the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1965 which provided that a child could be placed for adoption without the knowledge of the committee having the child in care. It could all be done by officers of the local authority. The respective roles of elected members and their staff has been repeatedly addressed in statutes, official inquiries, reports and legal judgments. Ten such pronouncements over the years since 1945 will now be examined. Cited briefly, in chronological order, they are: Dunne 1945; Monckton 1945; Curtis 1946; Maude 1967; Redcliffe-Maude 1968, Seeborn 1968; Barclay 1982; BASW 1983; Widdicombe 1986 and Blom-Cooper 1986. The list starts and ends with emphatic assertions of the direct responsibility of committee members. However, a very different stance was taken in the late nineteen-sixties when children's committees were about to be re-integrated in social services. The nadir of members' responsibilities was reached by two inquiries headed by John Maude. This thesis is primarily about ideas and events before 1971 but the remarkable swing of opinion on the role of committees since then cannot be overlooked.

5. 9 THE DUNNE REPORT 112

That unpaid members of authorities should personally acquaint themselves with the consequences of instructions which they gave to their staff was commonplace

in the nineteen-forties. In a different context, Mr Laurence Dunne, in his report on the 1943 Bethnal Green Disaster (when dozens of people were trampled and suffocated to death in a stampede for shelter as the air raid warning sounded) said, in paragraph 50:

"I think it was unfortunate ... no member of the General Emergency Committee at any time attended the site with the Deputy Borough Engineer to see how he had interpreted their wishes or to discuss with him the problems ... It should have been obvious that the measures proposed were quite inadequate to deal with the danger which was present in the committee's mind."

Mr Dunne valued, perhaps unduly, the commonsense which committee members, without professional knowledge of crowd control and structural engineering, might bring to the task.

5.10 THE MONCKTON REPORT 294

Sir Walter Monckton identified, in paragraph 46, the special duty of a 'fit person', local authority or individual, "to care for children as his own": the relationship was "a personal one which must neither be evaded nor scamped". Neither of the two local authorities concerned with the care of Dennis O'Neill sufficiently realised the direct and personal nature of the relationship between the supervising authority and the children they boarded-out.

5.11 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE 051

The Curtis Committee was by no means satisfied with the performance of Public Assistance Committees. There was much good work but the standard was so variable and at the lower level, so poor, that a determined effort had to be made to raise it.

One important argument for an ad hoc committee instead of a sub-committee of the Education Committee stated in paragraph 439, was that the latter:

" ... being mainly concerned with education of the mind and dealing

as it does with constantly increasing duties, may fail to recognise the importance of homefinding and in consequence may tend to treat it as a side issue and to deal with it through office staff."

Curtis expected the new children's committees to continue the responsibilities of the old boarding-out sub-committees but did not want the members to continue to visit foster homes: trained officers should do that. Committees should oversee the work of the trained visitors and the action to be taken on the visitors' reports and members:

" ... could also play a most important personal part by taking a friendly interest in the children and the foster mothers, inviting them to their homes, introducing them to people who would play the part of a friend and seeing that the children take a full part in the life of the neighbourhood."

5.12 THE MAUDE INQUIRY ⁰⁸¹ and 355
 THE REDCLIFFE-MAUDE INQUIRY

These two inquiries were chaired by Sir John Maude who became Lord Redcliffe-Maude between the publication of the two reports. They are conveniently referred to as 'Little Maude' and 'Big Maude' although 'Little Maude' ran to five volumes and many hundreds of pages. 'Little Maude' made a special study of committees in the child care service. They saw that the committee structure itself influences the quantity and type of the business and that the system is self-perpetuating. The more elaborate it is the more necessary it is to find tasks to justify its existence. Committee members often had considerable knowledge of individual cases and some avidly sought information. Some children's officers said that members generally adopted their recommendations without much questioning, although they liked to talk about the children. Some of this discussion was characterised in the report as 'at the level of gossip', sometimes gleaned by service on other committees. In paragraph 152, 'Little Maude' advanced the principle that issues should be dealt with at the lowest level in the authority consistent with the nature of the problem. It recognised the local

authorities' procedures affecting individuals, for example receiving a child into care or a placement for a particular child might affect the child intimately, immediately and directly and that decision might be coercive and restrictive. Paragraphs 146-149 said that elected members should be responsible for overall development and control of services and that decisions on casework should normally be made by paid officers but with clear channels of appeal to members, since ultimate direction and control rested with them. The officers should look out for the difficult case, the one likely to cause an outcry, the hard case for which no precedent existed and bring it promptly to the committee for a decision. Paragraph 127 distinguished between 'the undoubted value of deliberation in committee and the shortcomings of deliberation by committees'. Committees ensured that paid officials were kept in touch with political and public opinion by people of diverse interests who had had the chance to acquire a wide understanding of public services. But technical complexity frustrated members who got involved in administrative detail. Members thought they were directing but really they were wasting time on unimportant things. Paragraph 130 commented that the association of each service with a committee " ... produces a loose confederation of disparate activities, disperses responsibility and scatters the taking of decisions". In paragraph 145 the committee said that members should decide on objectives and the means and plans to attain them and review progress. 'Little Maude' recognised however that work affecting individuals or the public intimately and directly might arouse resentment and harsh publicity: there should be channels of appeal to members - paragraphs 146 and 148. Officers should make the casework decisions at the lowest appropriate levels and identify particular problems and cases which had such implications that the members should consider and decide them - paragraphs 151 and 152. In paragraph 169 the committee anticipated Seebohm by recommending

that related services should be grouped and allocated under one committee and in paragraph 200 they quoted research which found most committees' attempts at welfare casework to be 'fumbling and unsystematic'.

5.13 LITTLE MAUDE'S DRASTIC SOLUTION

The observations of 'Little Maude' accorded with the practice of many children's committees. But it went much further and recommended that:

"Principal officers, such as the Children's Officer, wishing to refer a specific problem for decision by elected members should not consult a committee but should obtain guidance from a member of the management board."

Successive governments have not implemented this recommendation. Perhaps they are more appropriate to a commercial undertaking, subject to market forces, than to a public service controlled through the ballot box. Sir Andrew Wheatley, in a note of dissent to 'Little Maude', said that if back bench members of local authorities were limited to a minor advisory role there would be insufficient incentive to stand for election. There is merit in his argument.

5.14 THE BARCLAY WORKING PARTY on SOCIAL WORKERS' ROLE AND TASKS 426

Since 1971, there has been such a marked reversal in the ideas advanced by John Maude that the tale must be carried forward a few years to the mid-eighties, by which time a very different view of the role of committees was authoritatively advanced. Barclay was told of a feeling among social workers that their managers neither understood nor supported them (paragraph 9.5) and quoted one authority's perhaps extreme example of a department where 70% of major decisions in child care involved at least four levels in the hierarchy. Barclay commented in paragraph 9.8:

"In some authorities, we understood the chairman and members of the social services committee are involved in such decisions. It is for

each local authority to decide whether there are any decisions affecting individual cases which require the involvement of elected members but we consider that it would be exceptional for them to make the decisions. That is not to say that difficult matters concerning clients should not be brought to their attention."

The committee ended their report at paragraph 367 with words which were printed in italics:

"We would however welcome signs of efforts to use to greater effect the dedication of individual local authority members and are convinced that children in the care of those authorities would be the gainers thereby."

5.15 THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS 040

In the professional, as opposed to the governmental field, the association glanced nostalgically at the past in their working party report which recalled that social workers used to meet councillors face-to-face at case sub-committees to discuss specific cases. Maude had tended to separate policy making from decision making.

5.16 THE WIDDICOMBE COMMITTEE 075 ON CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES

In chapter five the committee rejected radical change but thought that the corporate framework should be reinforced. Decisions should be taken by councillors, as far as possible in the public view. The ultimate responsibility rested with the whole council, which could delegate to committees, sub-committees and individual officers. The corporate nature of decision making maximised councillor participation, thus giving councillors (including those in minority) a direct involvement. In their paragraph 5.15.16 the committee tacitly endorsed the rejection by the Local Authority Associations and by the Government of Maude's proposal for a management board to make decisions.

5.17 THE BLOM-COOPER INQUIRY 307
 INTO THE DEATH OF JASMINE BECKFORD

Blom-Cooper's report entitled 'A Child in Trust' returns full circle to Mr Dunne, who had said in 1945 that committee members must take responsibility for not generally acquainting themselves with detail. Blom-Cooper criticised Brent Council's officers for:

"Failing immediately to inform the Shadow Chair of the committee, although both the Leader and the Shadow Leader of the Council as well as the Chair of the Social Services Committee had been told.

"Presenting a page-and-a-bit to a case sub-committee instead of the 13-page report made in the department."

Blom-Cooper recommended that whenever a child in care died or was seriously harmed, the relevant committee must meet to consider the case forthwith.

Summing-up, they said:

"In the final analysis, it is the members and not the officers who must bear the responsibility of the inordinate delay in responding to Jasmine's death ... It is not for officers to tell members where their duties lie."

5.18 ROTATING OPINION

The gamut of opinion from Dunne in 1946 to Blom-Cooper in 1985 started and ended on a peak. The nadir, represented by Maude, would have had officers normally consulting a member of the management group and not a committee. Seebohm, influenced perhaps by Derrick Morrell, at that time Assistant Secretary in charge of the Children's Department at the Home Office, started the upward curve. John Maude would have left the average councillor with little to do about child care except to hire and fire very senior officers, open and close homes and consider assumptions of parental rights and the committee's annual budget. Maude did not appreciate that local government child care must satisfy people that powers and resources are managed competently and fairly. It is not comparable with commercial and industrial management, where the market rules. Maude sought to

apply to public affairs the methods of a board of directors, making wealth by producing and selling goods and services. There is no market test for the choice of a foster home or the regime of a children's home. Maude's forceful comments on committee members' talking about the plight of those in their care should have been presented as a compliment, not criticism.

5.19 ELECTORAL CONTROL

A cynic has said, "The councillors are there to tell the officers what the public won't stand, in small things as well as great". From 1945 - 1971, the fear of losing votes may have kept some councillors from voting for large increases in expenditure. This became ineffective in wards where the marginal voter's rate contribution was reduced by housing benefit and rate rebates. It was, however, in the 'small' but important individual case, as well as in the wider issues, that the best children's committees concerned themselves. Whether, for example, a fifteen-year-old foster daughter should remain boarded-out with her foster father when her foster mother had died. Whether to pay fares for a foster child living a shorter distance from the school than the minimum qualifying for the school bus. Whether to buy a musical instrument for a keen young musician of limited talent. Whether to buy better than NHS spectacle frames to enhance the self-image of an unattractive child. Whether to stop using an elderly woman who had made short-stay fostering her life's work. These and myriad similar ones were the daily problems of children's departments. An uninformed councillor facing one of these issues for the first time will, like as not, form a snap judgment, perhaps reinforced by constituency pressure: "of course you can't let a nubile schoolgirl live alone in a house with a man" and "you can't spend more on a child in care than the average ratepayer can afford to spend on his own child". Issues like these can blow up into major political and public affairs. It is then that

a small cadre of case committee members, accustomed month by month to facing such questions and confident in the skill and integrity of their officers, can ensure carefully considered decisions according to individual circumstances rather than a count of votes, influenced by personal and party allegiances and prejudices, after a fiery public debate, fanned by rumour, press and broadcast. As Dr Johnson said, " ... men more frequently require to be reminded than informed".

5.20 PERFORMANCE OF COMMITTEES

Examples of the performance of individual committees are shown below with extracts from the inspectors' reports for the twelve largest authorities.

Grade 1 : A 'Very Good' Committee

The children's committee of authority 053 met five times a year. The care sub-committee reviewed at each meeting one sixth of all the children in care in the presence of the children's officer or deputy and the child care officers, who read out their reviews and answered questions put by obviously well-informed members, keen for news of children remembered from previous reviews. An agenda meeting, held the day before each committee, identified issues to be raised. After each committee meeting the children's officer and deputy each interviewed half of the child care officers involved and determined what action to take.

Grade 3 : Three 'Satisfactory' Committees

Authority 029 had a children's committee, a boarding-out committee and a homes committee and 14 area committees, on which other departments and agencies were represented. Some, not all, were well attended.

Authority 017 had three area sub-committees with no co-opted members and extensive delegated powers. The children's officer attended all meetings and presented the reviews. The inspectors, although mildly critical, seemed broadly satisfied.

Authority 106 had an adequately informed and conscientious committee who insisted on a detailed survey and report before even considering increasing the number of child care officers. All the professional staff met before each monthly committee meeting and decided how reports should be presented.

Grade 4 : Six 'Below Satisfactory' Committees

In authority 034 the child care officers were hardly aware of the area committees, whose concerns were confined to material conditions in homes and consents to adoption. The committee had no idea of the bad conditions under which staff worked. Staff were said to collude in preventing members from 'interfering in casework'.

In authority 036 only the chair was involved in special placings and expenditure. There were sub-committees for homes and to fix and enforce parental contributions; none for reviewing children's progress.

In authority 028 there were conscientious local house committees and boarding-out committees, the latter almost entirely of co-opted members. But the majority of the children's committee were opposed to closing large homes, with low unit costs and criticised time spent by child care officers in keeping children in touch with their families and with holiday foster homes.

Authority 050 refused to meet the inspector until 1964 when they were at last persuaded to adopt an area organisation. "They had not realised that work was taking place in the field as well as in the children's homes."

The staff of authority 018 sent a 'round robin' to the chief executive complaining of the rudeness of the committee, who would not allow the children's officer to speak. One committee member said houseparents had a comfortable job while the children were at school. The children's officer was sure that proposals to improve the nursery staff and equipment would only arouse resentment.

Authority 105 seemed to have a conscientious committee and sub-committees but they were resistant to boarding-out, especially from the 'family group homes'.

Authorities 062 and 067 gave too little information to justify a grading.

5.21 SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION IN THE TWELVE LARGEST AUTHORITIES

The total of children in the care of these twelve authorities was 24,653 or 33% of all children in care. Of these children, one-third were in the care of six committees graded satisfactory or better and the remaining two-thirds were in the care of the six committees graded below satisfactory.

5.22 SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION OVERALL

In all the English authorities (including the twelve largest) there were 57,591

children in the care of committees whose performances were graded as shown:

TABLE 5.22
Distribution of Children Among Five Grades of Committees

	Performance of Committee	Number of Authorities
1	Very Good	5
2	Good	23
3	Satisfactory	51
4	Below Satisfactory	37
5	Weak	3

The grades attributed by studying the reports are taken from the first available reports from each authority and this table presents a picture of the inspectors' impressions at the time they made the report.

5.23 CONCLUSION

The function of committees is not only to try to implement the wishes of the majority of the electors having regard to the rights of the minority but also to assure the electors of the officers' diligence and integrity. This function is not dissimilar to that of a jury. It requires no special qualifications, but a fund of understanding of people and knowledge of the community. Lord Devlin, Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, writing in 'The Place of The Judge in Government' (Stafford v Director of Public Prosecution) said:

"I do not know of any English judge who is against trial by jury,
but I know of some who would like to keep its wings clipped."

It is also essential that council sub-committees should continually be kept in touch with decision making in child care, contrary to Maude's recommendation. Only then can there be retained a body of informed councillors able to guide the

authority's members as a whole when crises occur. The contention of this chapter is that the quality of public services for children depends upon the successful alliance of lay committees with caring and efficient officers. Such an alliance cannot be achieved if elected members are kept in the dark. Study of the inspectors' reports shows that where the officers were reluctant to consult with the members, one of two consequences followed; either the councillors became angry and frustrated or their interest flagged and service on the committee became unpopular. The issue can be summed up by quoting a county councillor who said, in 1968 ^e:

"I stood for the council so as to keep the rates down and get better roads. I couldn't get on to the Highways or the Finance Committees. I had the choice of Smallholdings, Diseases of Animals or Children's. I am glad now that I chose Children's and it has become my main interest as a councillor."

Inspectors' reports show that committee performances were, on average, no more than mediocre. While significant improvements in material provision for children were made almost everywhere, inspectors found in general a disappointing absence of response to changing ideas. This will become apparent on reading the chapters immediately succeeding this one.

CHAPTER SIX

CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

"I hope these Children's Officers will not be a beautiful dream."

Dame Myra Curtis
Daily Mail : 8 January 1947

6. 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows the immense importance which the Curtis Committee attached to the functions of children's officers, to the new children's departments and the extent to which the persons appointed fell short of the committee's expectations. This shortfall can be attributed to human fallibility, both in the selectors of the first children's officers and in those whom they selected, and partly because not enough competent candidates applied for the new posts. The Curtis Committee might have recommended a wider trawl for candidates among those who had proved their competence in wartime jobs, both civil and military. This chapter will show that there was not much to choose between candidates with university degrees, those with professional social work qualifications, those with social science qualifications and those without any of these. It was composure, motivation, imagination, intelligence, energy, tact and commitment which made for successful management of a children's department. Not enough people with these qualities applied for the new posts. Given the crude methods of selection, by shortlisting and thirty minute interviews which councillors used at that time, it is not surprising that the qualities mentioned were lacking in a substantial number of the first-appointed children's officers. A better model of selection had already been devised during the war in the form of War Office

Selection Boards (known as WOSBEES) which took groups of candidates into residence to be observed in discussion and interaction over a day or two. But local authorities were not ready to adopt such new methods. Many, but not all, of the selection committees were looking for a new kind of person. But they made their choices by rudimentary methods.

6. 2 OFFICERS BEFORE 1948

Jennings, in his standard text on the poor law, noted that the 1834 Act provided for paid officers in place of the former unpaid parish officers, who had generally served unwillingly except when there was a chance of making an illegal profit ²⁵⁵. The series, unbroken from 1835 to 1947, of Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners, continued subsequently by the Local Government Board and Ministry of Health, shows, sometimes sententiously, but always informatively, how the poor law was administered by the guardians and councillors and their officers ³³¹. Up until 1948 many officers were part-time carers, exercising other responsibilities in the public or even the private sectors. The inclusion of Section 10 in the Poor Law Act of 1930, empowering the Minister to direct a public assistance authority to appoint paid officers, underlines the reluctance of some elected representatives to delegate their responsibilities. Education committees had come much later into the field when the acts of 1908 and 1933 empowered these committees to share and extend the work which had been started by the industrial schools and reformatory schools of the mid-nineteenth century. The work of these schools, mostly under voluntary management, is continuously chronicled from the 'First Annual Report of the Inspector of Reformatory Schools' in 1857 until 1908 ²⁵¹. Subsequently the Home Office issued occasional 'Reports of the Children's Department' ²⁰⁶. Education departments, being of later growth, did not inherit the expectation that face-to-face work with children

would be conducted by elected councillors. They were headed by chief education officers: graduates and qualified teachers, who delegated to assistant education officers or superintendent school attendance officers the responsibility for children committed to their council's care and those in remand homes and approved schools. The Curtis Committee said little about the administrative staff of public assistance committees and education committees and in their paragraphs 106 to 135, on 'Local Authority Administration of Children's Care', paragraph 111 said:

"Co-ordination appeared to depend on the degree to which the county Public Assistance Officer could exercise his influence on the local Guardians Committees."

Paragraphs 349 to 352 of the report relate specifically to boarding-out visitors. The Curtis Committee did not meet any such visitors who had had specific training.

"They were usually women of some practical ability ... but often lacking the imagination and resourcefulness of the trained worker."

The Committee seems to have been unlucky in choosing their sample of paid visitors. This was true, but there were also several Ministry of Health officers supervising evacuated children who became successful children's officers. The previous chapter gives a glimpse of the way in which paid officers of the public assistance committees were used and ill-used in one specific authority.

6. 3 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE'S SOLUTION

The Curtis Committee was appointed to inquire into the existing care of children deprived of home life and to secondly to consider what further measures should be taken. The committee's mild terms of reference did not mention a 'problem' but did imply that some further measures needed to be taken. The committee's own discoveries showed that there was a problem and they set about finding a solution. Their first urgent remedy, expressed in an interim report on the

training of housemothers and analagous staff, called for the setting up of training courses ⁰⁵². At the conclusion of their major task they made 62 separate recommendations. Their preference was for a single committee with power to submit estimates direct to the council, its own executive officer, not a member of the staff of any other chief officer. They wanted to see the welfare of deprived children specifically laid upon a children's officer. Paragraph 441 said:

"This may indeed be said to be our solution to the problem referred to us."

The efficacy of their solution to the problem will be examined in this chapter.

6. 4 SPECIFICATION FOR A CHILDREN'S OFFICER

The committee had increasingly impressed upon them the need for the personal element. Paragraph 441 said:

"No office staff dealing with them as case papers can do the work we want done ... involving many personal contacts and the solution of problems by direct methods, in particular the method of interview rather than official correspondence."

In paragraph 443 the committee envisaged the children's officer as the pivot of the new type of care organisation which they recommended. She would represent the council in its parental functions and would be the individual to whom parental responsibility was delegated.

"The Children's Officer should be the **person** to whom the child would look as guardian."

Paragraph 446 said that she should:

" ... be highly qualified academically, if possible a graduate who has also a social science diploma ... not be under thirty ... have some experience of work with children ... have marked administrative capacity ... able readily to grasp local authority procedure and to work easily with local authority committees ... Her essential qualifications, however, would be on the personal side. She should be genial and friendly in manner and able to set both

children and adults at their ease. She should have a strong interest in the welfare of children and enough faith and enthusiasm to be ready to try methods old and new of compensating by care and affection those who have had a bad start in life. She should have very high standards of physical and moral welfare, but she should be flexible enough in temperament to avoid a sterile institutional correctness."

6. 5 LACK OF A COHERENT PHILOSOPHY AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

The committee members said that children's officers should have some experience of work with children and be able to put them at their ease. They did not say that children's officers should be knowledgeable about children, only that they should have some experience of work with them and willingness to try new and old methods of applying care. There was, in 1946, much well researched understanding of the child as a physical organism and a good deal of sometimes conflicting educational theory. There was little perception of the deep feelings embedded in personal relationships. A beginning had been made in the child guidance movement but this was seen by central and local administrators as being a contribution only to the study of pathology, not normality. The response of a home office civil servant in 1938 to a probation officer's request for a year's unpaid leave to take the mental health course was ^f:

"Psychiatrists are rather odd people and we don't want odd people in the probation service."

Partial understanding of the consequences of disrupted relationships in infancy and childhood might have been sought from the London clinic in Canonbury. Staff, fellows and student supervisors under the clinic's directorship of Dr William Moody included John Bowlby, Sybil Clement-Brown, Lucy Fildes, Edward Glover, Kenneth Soddy and Ruth Thomas. Miss Clement-Brown and Miss Fildes became members of the Curtis Committee and Miss Thomas wrote the cogent evidence submitted by the clinic to the Curtis Committee ³⁸⁵. The committee was so distressed by some of the bad day-to-day care that it spoke briefly about

feelings and about the likely effects of changes in parenting and social environment. Paragraph 308 described the contrast with what they saw in some public assistance places and they were impressed by the appearance of the children in approved schools and with such relations between staff and children as they could observe in those schools. Although there were a few cases in which the attitude of children and staff caused concern:

" ... these did not detract from our opinion that the policy of the Home Office as carried out in the schools is enlightened and progressive ... Boys and girls seemed to be thriving mentally and physically".

The committee was content to refer, in its appendix on training, to the need for a boarding-out visitor to have:

" ... an understanding of the needs of normal children of different ages and an acquaintance with the problems of social behaviour and adjustment which are met with deprived children."

This recommendation broadly applied to boarding-out visitors the desiderata which they had recommended for houseparents in their interim report.

6. 6 CHARACTERISTICS OF NORMAL HOMES

In paragraph 427 the committee identified four needs which were satisfied by a good normal home:

- 1 Affection and personal interests; understanding of his defects; care for his future and respect for his personality and self esteem.
- 2 Stability, expecting to remain with those who will continue to care for him till he grows up.
- 3 Opportunity to make the best of ability and aptitudes.
- 4 A share in the life of a small group in a homely environment.

The committee added that some of these needs could be supplied in a child's own home, even if it were not in all respects a good one. They ended this prescription with a warning:

" ... it is a very serious responsibility to make provision for him to be brought up elsewhere without assurance that (these needs) can be supplied by the environment to which he is removed."

Unhappily the new children's departments started within systems of law and administration which were fairly certain to ensure that children would **not** have the stability which Curtis put as their second need nor the absence of institutionalism which was their fourth requirement. Curtis was singularly unconcerned about **early** childhood experience. In their section on 'Institutions (Residential Communities)', paragraph 478, they thought that:

" ... infants under the age of 12 months should be in an establishment specially arranged to meet their needs and giving highly skilled and specialised attention to their physical health ... We therefore advocate residential nurseries for all children up to 12 months and for older infants not over two-and-a-half years and not yet boarded-out or placed in a family group."

They did not mention the importance, in boarding-out, of early placement. Indeed, paragraph 478 quoted above, seems to imply that boarding-out should be delayed until the child was at least a year old. Not until 1951 did Bowlby publish 'Maternal Care and Mental Health'. In that year he addressed the annual conference of the Association of Children's Officers to such effect that the members subsequently amended the objects of their association to include a clause for 'the preservation of the family' ⁰⁰⁸. Bowlby's contribution was quoted and misquoted; applied, misapplied and sometimes bitterly challenged throughout the child care system. However, it awoke those controlling the new machinery to fresh thoughts about what might be its effect on the children.

6. 7 IDEAL AND REALITY

Persons each displaying a wide diversity of talents were, indeed, needed: the difficulty was to identify and recruit them. R A Butler foresaw the difficulties which would subsequently be experienced in trying to appoint a person who would combine the attributes of a caseworker with those of a manager. He wanted two

types of public officer: 'a man' at the desk who must be a first class administrator and then a man or woman who did the fieldwork, looking at people in their own homes. "I do not believe that one and the same person can do both jobs ⁰⁴⁸." A study of the inspectors' reports shows that Lord Butler was right to suppose that there would be some children's officers who would be sadly deficient in one or other of these capacities. On the other hand there were many who fulfilled the Curtis Committee's expectations in both respects.

6. 8 COMMUNICATING WITH DISRUPTED CHILDREN

Curtis required that a children's officer should 'be able to set children at their ease'. Talking to children who have disruption of parental care is a special talent. It is distressing to witness an inexperienced councillor or officer visiting a child placed in care. Such people suddenly intrude, unheralded, like archangels, into a child's life to exchange a few phrases including, "I am supposed to see if you are alright, how are you getting on?" ... and then disappear, possibly forever, perhaps the only link apparent to the child with his family and home town. It is common for people, now adult, to voice the bewilderment which they felt as children whose relationships and futures in the care of children's departments were not discussed with them. The remedies for this alienation were advanced most notably by Clare Winnicott, who started the first child care officers' course at the London School of Economics in 1947. One passage she quoted from a child care officer's report became so well-known that it acquired, for a time, the authority sometimes claimed for religious scriptures. It begins:

"When I called at the Home I was ushered into a large waiting room with dark upright furniture. The nurse in charge reported that the children were very happy and had settled in with no trouble ."

In the hour's conversation which ensued, the child care officer interpreted the children's remarks in terms of their anxieties that home and family might have disappeared forever.

6. 9 RECONCILING SIZE WITH EFFICIENCY

On the one hand the Curtis Committee wanted each child to look to the titular children's officer as his or her guardian. On the other hand they thought that, in small authorities, there would not be enough work for a person of the calibre they envisaged. Such authorities were therefore recommended to make joint appointments. The committee thought that 500 children needing visitation was the minimum to justify an authority's having its own children's officer and that 100 to 150 children was about the number which could be supervised by one person:

" ... subject to accidents, illness, change of employment and the incidence of retirement, be the friend of these particular children throughout their childhood and adolescence ... "

In practice a children's officer for any size of authority but the very smallest could not be personally in touch with all the children. She would be obliged to delegate to social workers and hope that each would stay long enough to have some effect on the child. It was necessary to depend on the staff of residential homes and on foster parents to put into effect what the committee wanted. Many of the first child care officers and area officers did, in fact, stay with the same children throughout. Such constancy is exemplified in the care of the Curtis family described in the appendix to this thesis, where Miss Moss was the area officer for the Curtis family from the time of John's reception into care at the age of seven until he left care eleven years later. Miss Moss also exemplifies the dual nature of the task which the Curtis Committee described as that of guardian. Miss Moss was the person to whom the Curtis boys and their parents

looked as the decision-maker. A succession of child care officers, some well-qualified and staying in post for several years, worked under Miss Moss' supervision, and were identified with her in the family's minds. Way above, in a large department, was the children's officer; a shadowy papal figure with additional cares: political, financial and managerial. In many small authorities the children's officer herself would have seemed to be like Miss Moss, a known person, apparently making the decisions, seen to be working in the same building as the social worker. As an area officer in a large authority Miss Moss conformed to the Curtis Committee's expectations as a subordinate, allocated to be the friend of a group of children throughout their childhood and adolescence. However, Miss Moss's area served a population so large that she required a third tier of social workers, working under her supervision. Whether those in the third tier were also seen by the children as 'friends, throughout their childhood', depended on individual characteristics and commitment. Numerous examples could be added to that of Miss Moss. Records show that child care officers generally remained for several years, supervising the same group of children. Departments created small hierarchies within area teams. One establishment committee, in April 1953, created in each area of the authority a post of area children's officer on what was then salary grade APT IV, and a senior child care officer on grade APT II. As people left for retirement or marriage the juniors were promoted. By 1964 there were five area teams with officers on grades IV and II, all but one of whom had 'come up through the ranks' from grade I in the course of two to five years during which, in most instances, they had continued to supervise the children and families with which they started. Three examples can be given of the success of this arrangement. A newly-qualified child care officer started in 1953 in the northern area of the authority, later becoming area officer and remaining with that group of children

until promotion to assistant children's officer twelve years later. In the western region, an area officer was appointed, single-handed in 1953, later acquiring a staff of two. He remained in that post, carrying a small long-term caseload until retirement in 1966. In the east, one of the Ministry of Health's former welfare officers for evacuees started with the county council some years before 1948 and remained in post until her retirement in the early nineteen-seventies. A neighbouring authority had at least two social workers with records similar to those of Miss Moss. They had started, in early middle-age, visiting a group of children and remained in the same area until retirement, becoming area children's officers with a staff of two or three child care officers but continuing either to supervise some of the original children directly until they left care or else delegating the task to subordinates but continuing to be known to the children and families concerned. Of course a child care officer's caseload was not static. There was a high turnover of short-stay care, of families moving to other places, of long-stay children returning home or moving to distant relatives, of youngsters leaving school and moving away for employment or training. So the Curtis concept of a child care officer's being 'the friend of these particular children throughout their childhood and adolescence' applied only to a relatively small core of families in care, or needing prolonged support short of reception into care. The remaining casepapers of a significant proportion of the families with which any one child care officer had contact would, in those days, have been closed within a few months, possibly to be re-opened by the same officer when a fresh need arose. Many of the families most likely to need service were in that small section of the population which is exceptionally mobile: there was no way whereby they could have received attention from the same child care officer as they appeared and re-appeared in different places.

6.10 RIGIDITY OF APPROACH

The creation of a cadre of established social workers, starting as child care officers (nearly always on first appointment and often having also undergone their long practical work placement in the department), moving up through the salary grades to become, and remain, like Miss Moss, in charge in the same area had its critics, especially posts as assistant children's officers which were filled internally. In one authority, from 1953 to 1968, no social work post was filled from outside the department, except for the intake of new, young, main-grade child care officers on first appointments. The growing hierarchy contained only those who had come up through the ranks. Top management naturally welcomes stability, promoting only those of like mind, identified with the ethos of the department who 'have not learned bad practices elsewhere'. On the hand it feeds complacency and impedes new ideas. There is, however, no shortage of good internal applicants for higher posts as they become vacant. To conclude, there is no optimum size for a child care authority and no optimum span of responsibility for a children's officer but it is rewarding to have one person, seen by the child and his family as the constant, informed, arbiter of the child's fortunes. Conversely, it is damaging if a department fails to provide the child with such a constant link with authority. This is the bureaucratic model; necessary but insufficient in itself. It is hoped that children in care will retain emotional anchorages with their own families and find new ones among those who are, for the time being, directly caring for them. The role of the children's officer and her nominated subordinates will then be seen for what it is: a 'guardian', not a substitute parent; a friendly and necessary long-stop, arising from the peculiar circumstance that care is being shared between the parents and a public authority and others, such as foster parents.

6.11 SELECTION OF THE FIRST CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

Chief officers in the established local authority departments had achieved their positions through a process of refinement. A future town clerk might have started as an articled clerk and gone through a series of selections by promotion, probably gaining experience in more than one authority. Similarly, a borough treasurer or engineer or medical officer would have started lower in the hierarchy, assuming chief officers' responsibilities only after testing in subordinate posts. Just over a third of the first English children's officers (34 out of 99 whose previous experience is recorded) had previously gone through the selection process to become assistant superintendent school attendance officers. Only two of the first children's officers were appointed from public assistance departments. For the remainder, neither the new children's officers nor the committees which appointed them had much way of knowing how they would perform. It was one thing to try 'methods old and new'. The crux of a chief officer's job is not knowing what is wanted but knowing how to get it. In the event, some proved to be long on compassion and energy and short on application. Many authorities chanced upon admirable appointments from outside local government. However, several made bad choices, sometimes solved by the children's officer's quitting the job after a few months or years. Other authorities remained saddled with poor selections, as the inspectors' reports show.

6.12 THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES' SELECTIONS

The Curtis Committee's prescription was followed faithfully by the majority of those authorities who made appointments from outside their own staffs. Excluding 27 authorities which are known to have appointed persons who were already in their employment, 77 first appointments in England comprised 60

women and 17 men. Few of those appointed from outside had experience in local government. Although the inexperienced performed, on average, as competently as the experienced ones, the former paid dearly for their lack of experience. Yet one half of the first children's officers lacked it. It is commendable that so many survived and that, of these, so many did well. Others did not. Taking a sample from south west England, lines drawn due west and south from the city of Gloucester contain or pass through eleven English authorities. Less than half of these retained their first choice of children's officer until marriage, promotion or retirement. Six authorities parted with their first children's officer in circumstances other than movement to a more responsible job. There are enough examples in other parts to show that the south west was not unique. One of the six wrote, in 1980, "All I have left is a large bundle of acrimonious correspondence with the Chairman". Inability to manage the relationship with the chair or the committee or with the chief executive or the medical officer crops up repeatedly in the early fifties. In 1956 one authority described its children's officer as 'competent, but cocksure, glib, complacent and dogmatic'. Another had, in 1958, one who 'lacked administrative ability, initiative and drive'. In 1955 another children's officer was described as 'completely lacking the dignity required for such a position'.

6.13 GOOD AND BAD APPOINTMENTS

The inspectors' views on the competence of the children's officers serving the twelve largest child care authorities are summarised below. One was allocated grade 5, one was grade 4 and one (which happens to be the authority in which Miss Moss supervised the care of the Curtis boys) was grade 3.

Grade 1 : A 'Very Good' Children's Officer

In authority 053 the child care officers appreciated the children's officer's interest on their behalf, although the attitude was strict and plain spoken and efficiency and hard work was expected. All 25 child care officers got casework advice directly from the children's officer or deputy. The children's officer never broke the rule of being available to give brief and apposite advice. The child's rights and interests took prime place and exceptions could be made to general rules within the legal framework. Meetings were held monthly with the child care officers to discuss policy 'do's and don'ts' and law and regulations.

Grade 2 : A 'Good' Children's Officer

The children's officer for authority 029 held regular meetings with area children's officers. It was a well organised department with accent on fieldwork. Authority was delegated to assistant children's officers who were expected to carry out clearly-defined policy. The children's officer quoted published figures to show that the proportion of children in care had been reduced, the expenditure per thousand population was very low and the proportion of boarded-out children had risen in ten years from the low forties to the high sixties. The inspectors concluded, however, that these figures did not necessarily provide a true basis on which to judge the children's officer's performance.

Grade 3 : A 'Satisfactory' Children's Officer

Inspectors found that the child care in authority 036 was well organised with effective delegation to areas and firm control at the centre. Staffing in the area offices was stable and work good. Possibly the areas had too much autonomy although the administrative plan kept the children's officer fully informed. The children's officer acknowledged that placing-out of older boys and girls was restricted to keep homes and hostels filled. The children's officer was eager to impress the inspectors with the children's officer's own importance and did not get on well with the deputy children's officer.

The remaining nine children's officers of the twelve largest authorities gave less than satisfaction, two of these being put in the lowest grade. Of these nine, four were graduates, one of whom also had a social science certificate. The other five are not known to have had any appropriate qualification. Of the nine, five were formerly assistant education officers, two were formerly in charge of school attendance sections, one was from public assistance and the previous history of the last one is not known. Inspectors' comments on these nine may be summarised as follows:

Department well-organised but despite good personal qualifications the children's officer is unsuccessful and lacks a good grasp of the department's work. There seems to be an iron curtain between the children's officer and the varied activities of the field workers.

Administration does not match the considerable material improvements. Lack of imagination results in poor use of a basically sound structure. Lack of liaison between children's officer and areas.

Children's officer reluctant to allow reasonable autonomy to subordinates, but no active leadership for fieldworkers. It will be a long time before there is improvement in the provisions made for meeting children's needs on an integrated basis and with some provision of continuity.

Children's officer takes up recommendations from staff and from inspectors after long and serious consideration after which change is often introduced by administrative direction without prior discussion. Neither children's officer nor deputy has any social work qualification or field experience.

The child care officers need much more stimulus and encouragement as well as advice on organisation. No one at central office has realised fully the manpower needed to comply with the exhortations they sent to the areas to bring families together and to concentrate equally on prevention, rehabilitation and boarding-out.

The children's officer insists on rigidly centralised organisation. Difficult to cater for individual needs of children. The children's officer believes all child care officers should work to him or the deputy and rejects supervision by experienced colleagues in the field.

Of many meetings I have had with children's officers I can remember none which evoked less enthusiasm or response from the children's officer. (Then refers to 'known weakness of the children's officer in regard to administrative matters'.)

In the last few years some areas have received no visits from the children's officer or deputy. Children's officer agreed that area officers could meet, but neither children's officer nor deputy attended. Senior staff vacancies not filled for months or even years. Child care officers appointed six years ago have not since seen the children's officer. It is insufficient to wait for children's officer to retire. Inadequacies must be taken up now with the authority at the highest level. (Graded 1)

Fieldwork like a ship without a rudder. Children's officer offers no help on general policy. Teams left to drift passively. Poor boarding-out and very high numbers in residential care. No check on regularity of child care officers' visits. Children's officer agreed to chair weekly meetings with top echelons but has not done so, being often absent on other matters. (Graded 1)

6.14 QUALIFICATION AND RANK AS A GUIDE TO SELECTION

One emphatic generalisation can be made from the evidence in the reports: that qualifications and occupational rank were no guide whatever to the likely fitness of a person for the task of children's officer. Inspectors accorded some of the highest commendation to children's officers who lacked experience or who lacked formal qualifications. On the other hand there were many casualties. One graduate appointee went to prison, for crimes against the person, committed in the course of employment as a children's officer.

6.15 ENTHUSIASM : AN ALMOST UNIVERSAL CHARACTERISTIC

Nearly every one of the first children's officers, including those whose performance ended in resignation, brought energy and enthusiasm to the task. Only one of the first appointees, in authority 073, was criticised for lack of concern by going on leave at a time when a crisis in the department might have been foreseen. This action was repeated by the director of social services in the Jasmine Beckford case of 1986 and aroused no hint of adverse comment by the inquiry. The main criticism of a significant number of the first children's officers was that they fell short in the exercise of authority and capacity to delegate. As Bevan said of George Lansbury, "bleeding hearts ran away with bloody heads".

6.16 WHAT THE HOME OFFICE THOUGHT

A couple of glances ahead show what the Home Office was later prepared to say publicly, in general, about the first incumbents. In May 1951, nearly three years after the act came into force, the Sixth Report of the Children's Department said, in paragraph 22:

"Whilst it would be unrealistic to suggest that all children's officers appointed possess in combination the high qualities specified by the Curtis Committee, the standard is generally good and reflects the care taken by local authorities in making the appointments. About two-thirds of the children's officers are women, and most have had university training."

This cannot have meant that most of the first children's officers had spent three years at a university and graduated. The department's claim no doubt covered external degrees attained by correspondence courses, teacher's certificates and external diplomas awarded after two or more years' attendance at evening classes. By 1969 complacency in the Home Office about the first children's officers was spent. In paragraph 1 of its Memorandum to the Royal Commission on Local Government in England it referred skittishly to ³⁵⁵:

"The authority's good or ill fortune in the 'lucky dip' of 1948 when the children's service was formed by transfer from ... (other) ... departments and staff were recruited from outside before authorities had had experience of the needs of the work."

6.17 PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS COMPARED WITH OTHER FIRST-APPOINTED CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

The Curtis Committee laid some stress on taking academic qualifications into account.

TABLE 6.17
Comparison of Competence of First-Appointed Children's Officers with and without Professional Training Degree and Certificate
England 1948-1949

Grade	5	4	3	2	1	Average Grade
With Professional Training	2	3	5	3	2	3.00
Without Professional Training	5	13	20	36	8	2.83

Five out of the fifteen professionally trained (33%) were below acceptable but 33% were above acceptable, whereas only 22% of those not professionally trained

were above acceptable. This is not significant. The two professionally trained children's officers graded 1 (weak) constituted 13% of the sample whereas among those not professionally trained, eight were graded 1 which constituted less than 10% of the sample.

6.18 GRADUATES COMPARED WITH ALL OTHER FIRST-APPOINTED CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

Some mild representations were made in the mid-fifties to the Association of Children's Officers by graduates who thought that the possession of any university degree should be considered of equal or superior value to that of a social science certificate. In Table 6.18 the competence of all graduates is compared with that of all other children's officers. The qualifications of barrister-at-law and of registered medical practitioner are, of course, treated as of graduate status.

TABLE 6.18
Competence of Graduate First-Appointed Children's Officers Compared with Non-Graduates
England 1948-49

Grade	5	4	3	2	1	Average
Graduate	4	8	8	18	3	2.80
Non-Graduate	3	8	17	21	7	2.61

The average score of the graduates was 2.80 compared with 2.61 for the remaining first-appointed children's officers. The competence of 20 graduate children's officers (49%) was graded acceptable or above and 21 (51%) were less than acceptable. Of the non-graduates 28 (50%) were acceptable or above and 28 (50%) were less than acceptable. When assessments of competence are based on the observations recorded in the inspectors' reports on individual children's

officers it is apparent that there is scant evidence that the possession of qualification gave any assurance of greater or lesser competence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE TO AND FROM CARE

"The social worker's helpfulness can lead the client along the road backwards with the smiles and assurances of an indulgent parent."

Bill Jordan

'Helping in Social Work'

London 1959 Routledge & Kegan Paul

7. 1 JUDGEMENT ON RECEPTION INTO CARE

The judgement whether or not a reception into care would be in the child's interests became the most important class of decisions to be made in children's departments. The criteria upon which these judgements were made and the degree of care and expertise and the level of authority at which decisions were made is the most significant indicator of a children's department's effectiveness. Of similar importance is the exercise by an authority of the use of the power to apply for an order to remove a child to a place of safety. There seems to have been little discussion at any time during the 23 years of the role of the social worker dealing with applications for reception into care. There was, however, some belated recognition of the risk of impairing the parents' capacity to look after their children if the children were provided for elsewhere by the intervention of the local authority. Henry Longley, a local government inspector, wrote in 1871 ³²⁸:

"... the minute and microscopic investigation of the circumstances of individual applications for relief which is the all important function of Guardians at the stage of the administration of relief would probably be carried out with greater effect in smaller areas than those of most of the existing unions."

Glancing back forty years, Mr Longley reminded readers that in the years

immediately after 1834, the Poor Law Commissioners in their annual reports enunciated the fundamental principals and elucidated in considerable detail the practical bearing of their considerations of individual cases. This practice had been discontinued under the Poor Law Board. Most boards of guardians had then lost sight of the principle. Consequently pauperism had increased until the principle had been reintroduced. In 1902 Sir William Bowsfield gave his presidential address to the International Congress for Welfare and Protection of Children. He said:

"The only way of preventing the vagrant's child from following his father's steps is to remove him entirely from the father's control and an industrial school will be his best refuge."

The focus of this chapter treads the delicate path between the ideas of Mr Longley and of Sir William Bowsfield.

7. 2 BEFORE 1948

Before July 1948, the voluntary reception of children into care was typically undertaken by relieving officers. The decision might however be taken by an untrained assistant or by a clerk or by the head of a children's home. Sometimes, especially when the application was for a short stay, no visit was paid to the applicant's home. Attention tended to be focussed on hardship to the parent if the applications were not granted rather than on hardship to the child and impairment of family cohesion if the application were acceded to. If there was a shortage of places in children's homes or foster homes an element of rationing would be introduced. Under the public assistance committees the reception of a child into care was, of course, a 'method of granting relief'. Relieving officers (like all employees of organisations disposing of costly resources) were expected to husband those resources by giving priority to those in greatest need and leaving others to fend for themselves.

7. 3 POOR LAW PRINCIPLES

The poor law had, of course, provided for such orphans and children of sick parents as were not succoured by relatives or friends. Here it was expected that the principle of 'less-eligibility' would ensure that no parent would voluntarily consign a child to the the workhouse. In practice this principle, which was fairly effective when applied to workless or infirm adults, was ineffective in relation to children, at least in the middle years of the nineteenth century, for three reasons. First, the decision to accept care under the poor law was not made by the child but generally by the parent who would not necessarily themselves be subjected to the rigours of the workhouse. No doubt the architects of the Poor Law Act 1834 envisaged that relief was not to be given to a child unless the parent also entered the house. In practice this was often disregarded. Before and after 1834 there were powerful humanitarian influences operating both nationally and locally. The Reverend John Becher, chair of Newark Quarter Sessions said in 1828 ⁰¹⁹:

"Let the system of management ensure every tenderness towards the infirm, the aged and the guiltless while it imposes wholesome restraint upon the idle, the profligate and the refractory."

Of course the commissioners of 1834 opposed such tenderheartedness. To them, the first and most essential of all conditions was that of less-eligibility:

"... that the law of nature by which the effects of each man's improvidence or misconduct are borne by himself and his family".

The commissioners criticised magistrates who ordered the overseers to pay out relief to a father of five children while his wife was in prison:

"It appears to the pauper that the government has undertaken to repeal in his favour the ordinary laws of nature; to enact that children should not suffer for the misconduct of their parents."

Parliament established a select committee to study complaints about the harshness of the act of 1834. The Poor Law Commissioners had failed to enforce this rule universally.

"In 1837 a 47 year-old labourer, Henry Sopp, gave evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee. Mr and Mrs Sopp had six surviving children at home and a weekly wage of under ten shillings. Because of the withdrawal of out-relief in supplementation of wages they could not, after paying eight pence rent, afford to buy enough flour and yeast to make the bread which, embellished by home grown vegetables in season, constituted the family's entire diet. So two children had just been taken into the workhouse. Mr Sopp told the Committee: 'They are much more comfortable than I could make them at home ... They appeared to be very well fed indeed ... and well taken care of ... I can see them every Sunday.' "

One wonders what the two children thought about their new well-fed regime and how Mrs Sopp felt about the loss of her eight-year-old daughter and ten-year-old son.

7. 4 A CENTURY OF CHANGE

It is not claimed that many lower-paid parents have ever wanted their children to be looked after by others. But the existence of a body of parents who did want it meant that less-eligibility no longer operated though it still operated on the child. This vigilance implies no moral judgment on parents who might be hard-pressed to provide adequate care in the face of physical, emotional, social, intellectual or economic disadvantage. To presume, as some child care workers did, that a parent who was unwilling, for the time being, to take over care, is necessarily an unfit parent, is far too simple. Each instance of reluctance to caring calls for an empathetic appreciation of the parent's complex motivation remembering that the social climate has meant that the rich have these children attended to by governesses and boarding schools.

7. 5 CURTIS ON REMOVING CHILDREN FROM PARENTAL CARE

The Curtis Committee was aware of the deprivation which a child might experience in its own home and of the importance of trying to remedy it. In paragraph 7 of their report, the members said it was of the utmost importance.

The committee had not been asked to deal with the problem but they hoped it would receive serious consideration. In the section on 'Conclusions and Recommendations', outlining the needs of childhood which are normally provided by a good family, they said in paragraph 427:

"Some at least of these needs are supplied by the child's own home even if it is not in all respects a good one; it is a very serious responsibility to make provision for him to be brought up elsewhere without assurance that they can be supplied by the environment to which he is removed."

This limitation in their terms of reference convinced the committee that they should not address the problems involved in deciding when a child should be received into care, although this would clearly be a central responsibility of the proposed children's officer. In paragraph 475 they recommended the extension of the 'Birmingham' scheme by which the local authority guaranteed payments to approved foster mothers for the maintenance of children placed with them privately by their parents. This was never implemented and is long forgotten. The committee did not mention the need to look whether the child needed to be away from home at all. They wrote their report at the end of a war when thousands of children were evacuated, parents were encouraged to work fulltime, millions of parents were perforce separated from each other, tens of thousands were without permanent homes. Other parents were married to Americans, Poles and nationals of other countries, mostly expecting to set up homes abroad with spouse and children. It is understandable that the Curtis Committee paid scant attention to this central and vital preoccupation of any child care service. In discussing home-finding for the normal child, they did say, however, in paragraph 447:

"We wish to emphasise once more the extreme seriousness of taking a child away from even an indifferent home. Every effort should be made to keep the child in its home, or with its mother if it is illegitimate, provided that the home is or can be made reasonably satisfactory. The aim of the authority must be to find something better - indeed much better - if it takes the responsibility of finding a substitute home."

In paragraph 443 the committee said that the children's officer would be directly responsible, under her committee, for admissions of children to the local authority's care. There was broadly accepted wisdom concerning the principles of reception into care. From personal communication and from the work of Jean Packman and others, it is clear that the differing attitudes of individual children's officers could have been displayed on a continuous scale. First were those like Mr Ainscow of London, who said in 1950 that he "wanted to extend the facility for reception into care to families of all classes" ⁸. This sounded like a universal overnight babysitting system for which parents would, presumably, pay according to their means. Twenty years later it actually happened, when a wealthy member of an employing authority was provided with a fulltime resident homemaker to look after his twelve-year-old son who was going through a bad patch of behaviour. The father insisted that he must pay the full cost and it proved unnecessary to continue the arrangement for more than a few weeks. The father said that one of the council's homemakers was more likely to provide a competent service than anyone he could employ on his own account.

7. 6 DEPRIVATION CONTINUED

The majority of children's departments went on much as before, those new to the service taking their cue from the poor law models. Many of them were restrained from opening their doors more widely because of the limited availability of places. There were, however, a small but gradually increasing group who found the care of children away from their families unattractive. This view was first publicly voiced by Mrs Menna Lloyd-Williams, children's officer for Cheshire, at a conference of chair and children's officers called by the Secretary of State in May 1951. Her aphorism, "it is better to build a fence at the top of a cliff

than to send an ambulance to the bottom", was taken up and widely quoted. Six months earlier, on 20 October 1950, the Association of Children's Officers had opened their first annual conference. A record of the informal address given by Mr John Ross shows that some members were concerned that it was no longer possible to pursue and prosecute parents who could, under the poor law, have been charged with "running away and leaving a child chargeable". Unhappily, there is no verbatim record of anything else said at the first conference. Nine topics were listed in the printed programme for "short papers to be read by children's officers followed by ten minute discussion". Fifteen minutes were devoted to discussion on "Problems of Reception into Care", led by Ernest Holmes, Birmingham's children's officer. There was no time for serious discussion of Mr Holmes' remarks which seemed to come as a surprise to the majority of his audience. He had advocated warning parents that if they walked off leaving their children in the office it might be an offence and asked the police to attend and warn them of this. Dr John Bowlby addressed the association's second conference in September 1951. In a paper entitled, "The Effects of Deprivation in Infancy and Some Means of Preventing it", he introduced his recently published "Maternal Care and Mental Health"⁰³⁵. He spoke of:

" ... the adverse effects of maternal deprivation, which we now know can be extremely grave, and methods of preventing children coming into care, since preventive work of this kind remains such a Cinderella".

Bowlby quoted Mrs Lloyd-William's cliff-top remark. He pointed out the happy conjunction that in child care, as in medicine, prevention is cheaper than cure. To treat the Curtis report as the 'Bible' of child care was dangerous: it was only half - the Old Testament. He regretted the omission of preventive work from the objects of the association (this was subsequently put right). The plan for a child received into care could only be one of two things, either his quick return home or permanent care elsewhere until late adolescence. He quoted the

children's officer for Croydon, "the longterm child in a home is a shortstay case which has been mishandled" ⁰⁸⁹. Seven years later Bowlby wrote that his paper in The British Journal of Medical Psychiatry, number 29, 1958, pages 211 to 247, had been taken by some to mean that separation of young children from mother figures was not a serious mental health hazard. Recent investigation had demonstrated:

" ... the great heterogeneity of personality organisation which is consistent with having undergone a prolonged separation experience starting before the fourth birthday and that therefore statements implying that children who are brought up in institutions or who suffer other forms of serious privation and deprivation in early life commonly develop psychopathic or affectionless characters (e.g. Bowlby 1944) are seen to be mistaken".

Bowlby claimed that the study did nothing to cast doubt on the many studies which indicated that some children in their personality developments suffer gross damage and others, lesser damage. The international report, 'Placing of Children in Families', had said, as early as 1938, that it was axiomatic that a child should not be removed from an otherwise competent parent if material aid would avert this course. To turn materially deprived children into emotionally deprived ones was an expensive way of standing on one's head. The issue of deciding when to receive into care was not specifically addressed at subsequent conferences, but at the fourth conference in 1953 there was a session entitled, 'Back Home: the Duty of the Authority under Sub Section 1(3) of the Children Act'. This was the duty which required an authority, in proper cases, to secure that a child's care was taken over by a parent or friend. That contribution to the conference opened with an anecdote about an inspector who had said that restoring children to the families was a 'minor refinement' of the main task of reception facilities ^h.

7. 7 ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE

The first consideration concerns whether or not a child should come into care and what steps, if any, should subsequently be taken to restore him to the family or friends and is, for brevity, called 'admission'. The word 'discharge' is used to describe any occasion when a child ceases to be in care. Examples are by a parent's resumption of care, by adoption, by reaching the upper age limit, by discharges of a court order, by emigration, by death or simply by an authority's decision that the welfare of the child no longer requires his remaining in their care. The second issue is one of general application in any society, the resources of which are finite. It is 'rationing' the supply of services and goods. It was not fashionable in the early days of children's departments to mention the relationship between financial resources and the provision of child care services. On 5 July 1948, three statutes came into effect simultaneously. These were (i) the National Assistance Act, which repealed every legal vestige of the poor law, (ii) the National Health Service Act, which made provision for health services and (iii) the Children Act, which laid a duty on local authorities to receive into their care children in certain specified circumstances. The public were confused about the new free health service and the child care service. A newspaper printed an item about a police officer who, on retirement, "wanted to be a children's officer under the new Health Act". While there was a body of medical knowledge leaving it to the health professional to decide when treatment was necessary there was not much criteria to evaluate the need for reception into care. This confusion lasted for the whole period from 1948 until 1971. Although Section 1 of the Children Act carefully defined the limits of the duty to receive children into care there were wide differences in the ways in which local authorities interpreted their duties. To some, the determination of need was self-evident: if the parents applied. This overlooked

the provision in Section 1 requiring that the intervention of the authority should be necessary in the interest of the welfare of the child. Some thought that 'care' in itself was a good thing. For example, in 1946 a spokesman for a voluntary society said that the generality of children in voluntary care were happier overall than the child population remaining in their own homes ¹. On the other hand the introduction of social workers into some of the new children's departments led to a very different assessment of the merits of public care.

7. 8 CONSUMPTION OF RESOURCES

The economic, social and legal aspects are not the first preoccupations of a study on child care. They remain very important ones. The problems are reproduced across the range of personal social services as well as in education, health, housing, legal and income maintenance services. This chapter shows how the decisions of housing and welfare departments profoundly affected the management of child care. Similarly, the policies of education departments in primary prevention (education for life, for domestic management and for parenthood), and in secondary prevention (counselling, school attendance and special education) affects the child care services. The practices of health services including the primary health care team, health visitors, environmental health and hospital practices often determine whether or not a child's home was preserved or rendered untenable. The law enforcement machinery was often crucial in determining whether or not a child was admitted to care or stayed in care. This is evidenced not only by decisions of courts to make or discharge committal orders, but by the activities of the police and the effects of the law relating to delinquency, eviction, illegitimacy, immigration, parental rights and school attendance. The connection between poverty and loss of parental care is also well documented. It is a feature of local government that "you can go on wasting money

in the old ways but it is hard to persuade committees to spend money in new ways". On Christmas Day 1948 one authority's mayor accompanied the children's officer to children's homes where they found boys of twelve who had been given presents of second-hand clockwork cars without keys and younger children had received discarded picture books defaced with the scribbles of their former owners. The chair of the special education committee personally sanctioned or rejected individual recommendations for the repair of footwear or the supply of a shirt to enable a child to attend school. On the other hand the decision to receive children into care had been made by a conscientious and tenderhearted assistant relieving officer who said, in 1948, she "liked helping parents in difficulty" ^J. Similarly the juvenile courts, in committing children to care, seemed sometimes to be moved more by anger against the child or his parents than by concern for his welfare. A sixteen-year-old mother was kept for months in a reception home because of suspicion that one of her brothers (at home on bail) was the father of her child and, were she at home, he might persuade her to retract the evidence she would be expected to give at his trial. An unsuccessful plea to the court to let her go home to her mother and her baby was impatiently countered by the police inspector who asked why the baby could not also be taken from its maternal grandmother and put into the reception home. Months later the brother was acquitted and the girl went home.

7. 9 INSUFFICIENT CARE IN THE USE OF SOCIAL SERVICES' RESOURCES

The general proposition that services are too lightly allocated and carelessly perpetuated can be illustrated. In one authority there was a series of applications via a hospital for reception to care of children whose parents could make satisfactory arrangements for looking after their children at home. The parents had each been advised by an assistant almoner that there was no need

for them to look for care because the children's department was appointed to do that. In two further instances, when the children's officer visited the hospital, he was assured by the mothers that they had made proper arrangements. The assistant almoner had submitted that children's department should know in advance so that they could pop in and make other arrangements if the family's plans failed. In the early years of one children's department it was considered unremarkable to discover short-stay foster mothers continuing to receive boarding-out allowances weeks after the foster children had gone home. In 1952 a social worker went to collect a child from its grandmother who was happy to keep him during the mother's stay in hospital. The grandmother was obliged to let the child go because the social worker said there was a good foster home waiting. Similarly a social worker went to collect a child who had returned from a residential school for the holiday. The worker insisted that the school had asked that the child should not be allowed to stay at home although there was no suggestion that he would be harmed there. Records from one children's department show that two children placed with relatives in distant areas were not visited by local social workers for over a year after the families had been visited by the placing authority, because the local departments did not approve of the homes. The placing authority had to make special long distant visits at the statutory intervals until the children grew up. Across the range of personal social services, insufficient control and thought was exercised over the initial provision of service to an individual and the continuation of that service as circumstances changed. This has nothing to do with 'generosity' in spending public funds or 'meanness' in conserving them. It has everything to do with the careful assessment of individual need and ensuring that help is given in the way which ensures the welfare of the recipient.

7.10 INTERDEPENDENCE OF ECONOMY AND WELFARE

The most idealistic social worker must face the fact that resources are not unlimited and the more spent on one thing meant there was less for another. This was put by Dr John Bowlby in his address to the Association of Children's Officers when he pointed out that boarding-out was not only preferable but also cheaper than residential group care. Bowlby did not go on to make the point that it was cheaper still not to admit children thoughtlessly into care or carelessly allow them to drift along in care after the need had passed. Reports on the 23 years of some children's departments tell of early rising numbers in care, rising expenditure, overcrowded and understaffed homes and nurseries and inadequate numbers of trained child care officers. This was because the money needed to put right these deficiencies was being soaked up in providing a costly and inferior service to children who might have been better off in their own homes or in foster homes or with adoptive parents. Some authorities never appreciated that money spent on keeping children in care would sometimes be better spent on supporting families. In one authority the health committee provided residential home helps to hundreds of families to enable them to keep their children at home in an emergency. This example was not widely followed although, from 1963, children's committees could employ 'homemakers' under Section 1 of the act of that year. The financial factor has its black side. Inspectors reported that the chair of the children's committee in authority 107 ordered the children's officer not to receive into care a family of six children whose mother had died. A year later they were all committed to care after being sexually abused by the widowed father. It was easy for frustrated well-wishers and voluntary agencies to claim that suggestions to help keep children at home stemmed from a venial conspiracy to save expense to the ratepayers. While some children's officers made the proposition to their authorities that spending money

on child care officers would increase the proportion who were boarded-out and so save money overall, it is doubtful if many of them said that more child care officers would mean fewer children in care or result in earlier restoration of children to their parents. In the early years it seemed axiomatic that 'care was a good thing'. An inspector said, on 4 July 1948:

"We at the Home Office expect that the number of children in care will be doubled."

The early inspectors' reports use adjectives like 'lenient' to describe authorities who readily received children into care and 'severe' to describe those which rigorously inspected applications before deciding to receive. The inspectors' reports before 1965 (in which year the chief inspector set headings under which reports on inspections of children's departments might be compiled) paid scant attention to practice for investigating applications for reception into care and virtually none on the authority's power under Section 5 to make representation to the juvenile courts concerning ways of helping a family, short of committing their child to care. Inspections of departments in the nineteen-fifties were often called 'boarding-out inspections' to distinguish them from visits to inspect group homes. This is understandable because the Home Secretary made regulations to govern boarding-out and to the administration of children's homes but none to regulate decisions to receive a child into care or to send him home. Indeed there seemed to be an unspoken assumption that being in care was a good thing, following the thoughts of 'Viator' in Child Care Quarterly in 1947.

7.11 TWO DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

On the one hand there were children's officers who put most of their effort and resources into making their departments into family social work departments, bent on supporting children with their parents and finding substitute parents by

adoption or fostering for those who could not remain in, or return to, their homes. On the other hand there were children's officers whose energies were directed to expanding a caring service, for increasing numbers of children, with additional facilities such as hostels for young people in work. This polarity was examined by Jean Packman in 'The Child's Generation' including a comparative study of the Oxfordshire and Devon children's departments during the preceding years ³⁰⁴. It might be said from a study of Packman's findings that Devon had been unashamedly reactive to the requirements of the Children Act whilst Oxfordshire had been pro-active. Devon had waited for children in need to be referred to them, whereas Oxon had searched out need. Here are examples which Packman quoted, with references to the pages of her book:

"Devon paid a grant to the NSPCC specifically to appoint a woman visitor. Oxfordshire decided to do their own preventive work (page 55).

"Devon maintained that the duty to provide for homeless families lay with housing and with welfare. Devon's welfare department then developed its own family casework service. Oxfordshire children's department went in for rent collecting and debt-clearing and asked the county council to let them pay rent arrears to avoid evictions (page 59).

"Devon representatives had actually been to look at Oxfordshire's hostels and had then decided not to follow suit because of the practical difficulties of staffing and because '... a child care officer is more ready to give up trying to maintain a young person in the community if a hostel is available'. Oxfordshire opened hostels for working boys and for working girls in the early nineteen-sixties (page 42).

"After 1963 the Devon welfare department continued its family casework using Section 1 money from the children's committee budget. In Oxfordshire the children's committee 'took the dominant role' (page 68).

"In Oxfordshire, by July 1964, 655 children were being assisted under Section 1. Devon 'also climbed' (page 68).

"Devon believed that before 1963, prevention work should only be engaged in when an application had been received for reception. Oxfordshire 'lay at the other extreme' (page 60).

"Oxfordshire's innovatory example was mentioned in the Parliamentary debates preceding the 1963 Act (page 68).

"The Devon committee approved their children's officer's refusal to receive into care a London child in a private nursing home in Devon and instructed him to see that the child was sent home and directed that he should deal with similar cases in the same way. In Oxfordshire concern for privately-placed children 'seems to have been unusually vigorous', more than half being subsequently admitted to Oxfordshire's care because the placements were unsatisfactory (page 77)."

Devon did not enter the adoption field after the 1958 Act claiming that voluntary agencies in the county were vigorous and competent (page 92). The Devon children's officer thought that children should either remain with their parents or be placed for adoption and that other forms of substitute care were partial and unsatisfactory solutions. Packman said,

"... local authority social workers were often in a good position to provide a proper service for the natural parents. Giving consent 'freely' should mean not only without pressure from other persons but with some degree of free choice. Other choices should include foster and residential homes and various preventive strategies".

7.12 MEASURING THE CONSEQUENCES

Extracts from the Children's Services Statistics 1961-1962 yielded the following comparative figures:

TABLE 7.12
Expenditure

	Devonshire	Oxfordshire
Population on 30.6.61	529,780	205,680
Expenditure for 1961-1962	£ 139,315	£ 175,692
Rate equivalent	£ 4. 1. 0d	£ 17. 7. 6d
Children in Care	450	577
Children in Care per thousand population	0.8	2.8
Children in care per thousand child population	3.1	9.7
Average weekly cost per child in care	£ 5. 9. 0d	£ 15.15. 0d
Net expenditure from rates and grants per thousand total population	£ 262.19. 0d	£854. 4. 0d

7.13 CONFLICTING FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS ABOUT RECEPTION INTO CARE

In making decisions about 'voluntary receptions into care' a number of, sometimes conflicting, factors may enter. Some of these many factors were not taken into account. Throughout children's committees there was no consensus about deciding when a child should properly be received into care; no consensus among parliamentarians who made the law; none among lawyers who interpreted it; none among councillors who funded it; none among the children's officers, civil servants, inspectors and social workers who applied it and none among the academicians who conceptualised it. The issue raises problems as old as Solomon, who made his name by a paradoxical judgement about possession of a child and got nearer to the problem than many subsequent thinkers. The question is certainly not to be dismissed by a cliché about 'the best interests of the child'. That only pushed the decision a stage further back: 'who decides what is in the child's best interests?'. It also requires consideration of the interests of others, first the interests of the parents and also the interests of the

community. Effects on the community can be marked on a continuum, the poles of which will, for convenience, be labelled 'spiritual' and 'material'. Towards the spiritual pole must be considered the undesirable features which affect society generally by operating a system which, taken to the extreme, implied that parents have a 'welfare right' to have their children looked after by the local authority as well as their right to schooling for children of five and over. Towards the 'material' pole lies consideration of the effect on the tax and rate payer. Sometimes twenty times as much may be spent on a child in care than is spent by the average tax payer on a child at home. Midway between these poles lies the great battleground where vested interests, emotional and material, clash from their sectarian stances, be they educational, financial, moralistic, political, psycho-analytical, religious or based upon self-interest. While in a particular instance a number of factors will underlie the decision about receiving a child into care, an attempt will now be made to identify some of the usually unspoken assumptions which may have been taken into account in deciding whether or not to receive a child. In order of consideration, in addition to available resources, they are (i) the authority's view of what is best for the child's welfare and (ii) the law.

(i) The Child's Interests

Clearly there are situations where the authority **must** intervene, for example when a child is lost or remains abandoned or his carer is suddenly taken ill in the street and there is no means of identifying the child's family address or when a lone carer is taken to hospital and there are no relatives, friends or neighbours with sufficient competence and interest in the child to be willing to take him in emergency, with a boarding-out allowance if necessary. These instances, though quite exceptional, seemed to happen at least once a week in

most children's departments (many times a week in large departments). However, they were still exceptional: all over the place relatives, friends and neighbours were fixing to look after each other's children without any reference to public authorities. It is notable how few social workers would allow their own children to come into care. Receptions into care represented the socially pathological tip of an enormous wholesome iceberg of ordinary neighbourliness. To get stranded on that tip could presage a nomadic childhood within the institutionalised rigours of the care system. This is not to attribute fault to the parents who were among the most socially harassed groups in the population. The single case study of The Curtis Family, in the Appendix, shows how the innocent children of a dim family were dispersed to the point of no return to their parents, who maintained lifelong interest, through failure of co-operation between the housing and other agencies and careless receptions into public care. Mr and Mrs Curtis, the elderly but competent grandmother, the adult half-brother and the four Curtis boys kept asking about each other but their family's life was virtually destroyed. Similar scenarios were repeated many times between 1948 and 1971. The experiences should build in the social worker an implacable resolve not to use reception into care as an easy solution to fulfilling the child's need for immediate care which could, by more professional skill, be resolved in a more constructive way. Since 1971 the situation has been resolved in a very unattractive way by the use of 'bed and breakfast' housing. This in its worst cases is almost as punitive but it allows mothers to stay with their children.

11 The Law

Leaving aside the tiny minority of abandoned, lost or orphaned children without relatives, the decision to offer 'voluntary' care depended upon the phrases in Section 1 of the now outdated act. First, it had to be found that the parents

were 'prevented' from circumstances from providing for the child's proper accommodation, maintenance and upbringing. Secondly there had to be no parent or (legal) guardian wanting to take over the care of the child. Thirdly it had to be necessary in the interests of the welfare of the child for him to be received into care. Although the formula enshrined in Section 1 stood the test of time as a working tool, it was flawed from the outset by the poor law concepts out of which it was born when the National Assistance Act came into force simultaneously with the Children Act and provided for a universal system of income maintenance for all people who lacked the financial resources, regardless of merit or origin. The entitlement to a subsistence income was absolute from the moment a person set foot in the kingdom. Clearly no parent could thenceforth be prevented from providing proper maintenance and no child could be received into care solely on the grounds of 'poverty', that is, inability to provide for his proper maintenance. At least one local authority resolved not to receive children into care **solely** on the grounds of poverty. This resolution caused quite a stir in the inspectorate. It was, of course, denying the writ of the Children Act from the day it came into force. The inspector wanted the Secretary of State to write to the chief executive of the local authority for this sacrilegious disregard of authority. There is, however, no indication in the file that this was done. Secondly, it appeared at first sight that parents could not thenceforth be prevented from providing accommodation since the National Assistance Act required, in subsection 21(1), that each local authority should provide temporary accommodation for people in urgent need thereof. But this was limited by the proviso that the authority might, but was not obliged, to provide temporary accommodation unless the circumstances occasioning the lack of accommodation "could not reasonably have been foreseen". Many authorities interpreted this as excluding a duty to accommodate families who had become

homeless as a result of eviction. From 1949 to 1971, about 80,000 children were received into care of English local authorities for homelessness, a sorry tale of 80,000 separate human miseries awaiting a housing act which, at least in theory, would lay a duty on housing authorities to house the vulnerable groups, including families with children. After the imposition on housing authorities of responsibility for **accommodating** homeless families there remained in practice only the duty to receive children whose parents were prevented from providing a proper upbringing. The definition of proper upbringing left room for widely varying judgments. One authority was asked by a peer of the realm to receive into care the son of his widowed domestic employee in order to "secure the child's Roman Catholic upbringing". It was later heard from the priest administrator of the Catholic Rescue Society that he had felt unable to resist pressure from this influential member of his sect. The child was placed in Roman Catholic children's home and his mother continued to work as a resident domestic in the peer's household. Difficulty arises over the phrase, "prevented from providing". Does parental unwillingness so to order their lives that they are unable to provide properly for their children mean that they are 'prevented' from providing? Inspectors recorded an example of a mother who had tried to get the education authority to provide boarding places for her two daughters who were in their early teens. When that authority decided that there was no justification for providing boarding education the mother went on overseas journeys leaving the children unattended. Surprisingly, the children's officer, with the inspector's written approval, received the girls into care, presumably on the grounds that they had been, and remained, abandoned. On the evidence of the reports there were no grounds for deciding that she was 'prevented' from providing for them. There seems to have been a **prima facie** case for prosecuting her for neglect or for abandonment but it is for the local authority to decide

whether they should have received into care by order of a court.

7.14 HOME OFFICE CLASSIFICATION OF REASONS FOR RECEPTION INTO CARE

The Home Office met problems head on when it came to classify for statistical purposes, in 1949, the kinds of reason which would justify reception into care. These in general followed the definitions in Section 1, for example 'abandoned'; 'no parent or guardian' or 'mother's illness'. But they were stumped when they came to count classes of children whom the poor law had customarily provided for and which were not **specifically** defined in Section 1. That section was so widely drawn that the duty was to receive into care a child who was prevented 'by any other circumstances' from providing for his proper accommodation, maintenance or upbringing. Consequently they tacked further categories onto their statistical scheme: 'illegitimate and mother unable to provide a home', 'unsatisfactory home conditions' and 'other reasons'. The national assistance board was obliged to provide financial assistance to unsupported mothers and to any parent without adequate means to maintain his or herself and any dependent child. The combined efforts of the affiliated agencies of the then National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child would, properly consulted and used, have never allowed a lone parent to be compelled by circumstance to be parted from her child. Unhappily the prospect of life in a mother and baby hostel, in welfare accommodation or in places provided by unsympathetic landlords (including unsympathetic housing authorities), combined with the financial struggle to survive on scales of national assistance which, in 1948 were worth in real terms, about one-half of their value forty years later, was so daunting that many single parents, especially the younger ones, the less experienced and the least competent, were allowed and sometimes even encouraged to agree to their children being received into care. Some authorities, observing

the subsequent plight of such children, set their faces against such receptions, arguing that the parent (after the statutory six weeks' wait) had a choice either of continuing to care for the child with benefit from the national assistance board and social care from a variety of statutory, charitable and informal services (not least the parent's own family) or alternatively seeking an adoptive home for the child while it was young enough to bond with surrogate parents.

7.15 PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE UNMARRIED MOTHER
AND HER CHILD IN 1953

The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child asked itself two questions. Should the aim be to keep the child with its unmarried mother, since you don't ask widowed or deserted mothers to give up their children? If not, at what point should they 'go on their separate and permanent ways'? Miss Granger, the general secretary of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child wrote, in 'Child Care Quarterly':

" ... the National Council tried to help her remain responsible for her child if she wished to do this, as opposed to placing for adoption."

Miss Granger examined the options:

- a return with mother to maternal grandparents, often a happy solution so long as the child is not deceived as the identity of his mother;
- b domestic service, useful only during breastfeeding;
- c fostering - no solution, unless the mother lives with the foster mother;
- d day nursery - often an unhappy arrangement, the real pitfall being when the baby is ill;
- e long-term hostels for working mothers and their children, can hardly be over estimated;
- f state pensions for women bringing up a child on her own, unlikely to be approved by public opinion;

8 Income Support (then called National Assistance), but there comes a time when this expenditure of public funds can no longer be continued.

Miss Granger appears to have favoured a regular grant from a charitable body followed by reception of the child into care of the same body later on, " ... to make the break at the most suitable rather than the most expedient moment". Since then the Finer Committee's report has been published, stable co-habitation and non-marital birth is acceptable and rates of income support, despite some recent setbacks, have increased in real terms⁰⁸⁰. Hundreds of thousands of lone parents now raise their children to adulthood, some with support, intermittent or continuous, from public funds. Bowlby's insistence on permanency is now widely accepted and, if a single mother is not planning to bring up her child with support from formal and informal sources, she is usually persuaded that adoption will best serve the child's interests. The distressing catalogue of alternatives presented by Miss Granger, all ending with mother and child going their separate ways by admission of the child to a voluntary home, must have died out along with the children's departments which tolerated it.

7.16 FIRST EFFECTS OF THE 1948 REGIMES

The switch in 1948 from the Poor Law Act 1930, which required authorities to set children to work or put them out as apprentices, to the Children Act of 1948, which required them to receive into care any child whose parents were prevented by any circumstances from providing for him, added to the number of children in care. The local authority was, however, specifically required not to intervene unless to do so would be in the interests of the child's welfare. Children's officers interpreted this proviso in various ways. Some saw it as limiting their powers to receive a child into care, while others saw it as extending their powers, so that if the other conditions were not satisfied they

nevertheless received a child into care 'in the interests of the welfare of the child', for example, even if a grandparent was able and competent and willing to look after the child for the time being. Some other agencies took the same view and twenty years after the act was passed senior police officers argued with the children's officer that a girl of sixteen should be received into care on the grounds that it would be in her interest although the child and her mother did not want this action to be taken. The criteria upon which these judgements were made and the degree of care and expertise and the level of authority at which this decision is made is the most significant indicator of a children's department's effectiveness. Another indicator is the exercise by an authority of the power to apply for an order to remove a child to a place of safety. There seems to have been little discussion during the 23 years about the role of the social worker. There was some recognition of the risk of impairing the parents' capacity to look after their children if the children were provided for elsewhere by the local authority. However, the decision might be taken by a clerk or by an untrained assistant or the superintendent of a children's home. Sometimes, especially when the application was for a short stay, no visit was paid to the applicant's home. Attention tended to focus on hardship or impairment of family or family relationships if the child was removed from the people and surroundings with which he was familiar. If there was a shortage of places in children's homes or foster homes an element of rationing might be introduced. Relieving officers were expected to husband those resources by giving priority to those seen to be in acute need and leaving others to fend for themselves. It was not then a question of satisfying criteria but of admitting the child in most acute need when a 'vacancy' occurred. That was one point of view. It resulted in the creation of 'waiting lists' of children who were considered to need reception into care.

7.17 A MANDATORY OBLIGATION

There was another point of view, that the duty of the authority was absolute: if the child was not receiving proper accommodation, maintenance or upbringing and it was not possible to provide this without reception into care, then the child had to be received into care. If necessary the children's officer must take the child to his or her own home! Followers of this school of thought, which was practised by some children's officers in the early months, would not countenance the concept of a 'waiting list'. To say that a child had to wait when he ought to be in care was a dereliction of the authority's duty. Looked at another way, if the child's reception into care could be postponed then there was no justification for receiving him into care at all. With experience, it was discovered that there were occasions to which this rigorous discipline did not apply. Examples were when a person, like a relative or private foster parent had been adequately caring for a child and then wished to stop doing so. It would not necessarily be unreasonable or contrary to the child's wellbeing to ask the current carers to keep him a bit longer. It might be proper to put such a child on the 'waiting list' for a short time while other care was being sought to save the child being moved twice. Such occasions occur rarely, but they are the exceptions which prove the rule. In such circumstances it would generally be preferable to receive the child formally into care leaving him living with his current carers for a short period before moving him to a foster home, hopefully permanently.

7.18 IDENTIFYING THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Section 1 of the Children Act 1948 placed a duty on the local authority to receive children into their care when it appeared that their intervention was necessary

for the child's welfare. The duty lay upon the authority in whose area the child was physically present: the question of 'ordinary residence', which determined financial responsibility, could be settled later, either by agreement or by requesting the Home Secretary to settle it.

7.19 RECEPTION INTO CARE OF CHILDREN IN THE POSSESSION OF PERSONS OTHER THAN PARENTS

Paragraph 24 of the Fifth Report of the Children's Department emphasised that an authority had no power to receive a child into care under Section 1 against the wishes of the parents or *de facto* guardian. After some initial confusion about their powers the authorities settled down to an understanding that they might, in proper cases, attempt to persuade a person having possession of a child who was not their own to allow him to be received into care. If the person having *de facto* possession refused, the proper course was to bring the child before the juvenile court if the evidence warranted it. The authorities had no right to demand a child from any person who had possession. If necessary an immediate place of safety order could be made by a magistrate.

7.20 THE HOME OFFICE VIEW

Paragraph 5 of Home Office Circular 160/48, introducing the Children Act, was not restricted as the Curtis Committee had been by its terms of reference.

"While the provisions of the Act relate only to children who have had the misfortune to be deprived of a normal home life, the importance must always be kept in mind of doing all that is possible to save children from suffering this misfortune. When a home can be so improved that it is unnecessary to remove the child from his parents ... the advantage of this course is unquestionable ... local authorities will be anxious that any of their officers whose duties either in connection with the children's committee or with any other committees of the local authority bring them into touch with neglectful parents shall keep in mind the desirability of doing anything that may be possible towards the rehabilitation and education of such parents and of enlisting for this purpose in appropriate cases any help that can be rendered by voluntary

agencies. To keep the family together must be the first aim, and the separation of a child from his parents can only be justified when there is no possibility of securing adequate care for a child in his own home."

The arguments for more caution in removing children from parental care were not heavily emphasised in the nineteen-fifties. Little was heard about the complex, and sometimes emotive, factors which might determine a decision to bring a child before the juvenile court as being in need of care. Generally when a child came to court the need was considered to be self-evident to everyone except the child and his parents. More often than not neither the child nor the parents were capable of putting a case to the magistrates nor did they know how to get legal representation. This is not to say that all magistrates' courts were unmindful of the requirements of natural justice: the clerk or the chair would sometimes try to explain what was going on and invite both child and parents to address the court. Witnesses might give graphic descriptions of dirt, neglect and squalor (often heightened by using the word 'indescribable') creating an impression which might be reinforced by the unkempt appearance of the family or their manifest bewilderment. Magistrates might easily conclude that the children's welfare would best be served by committing them to public care. Individual well-wishers, including some lawyers and social workers, would intervene from time to time in a special case and the local authority was empowered by an amendment to Section 76 of the 1933 Act " ... to make representations to the court as to the making of the order ... ", but even this was qualified by a proviso in the same section enabling the court to proceed without consulting the local authority if " .. so to do so would in the opinion of the court cause undue delay ... ". In 1949 the Croydon magistrates fined an unsupported mother for neglecting her schoolboy sons and, at the same hearing in the absence of the boys and of representatives of the local authority, committed them to the authority's care. Later that day the NSPCC inspector orally informed the children's officer of

these proceedings and invited the officer to accompany him to the boys' school to assume the care of them and take them to a home.

7.21 THE USE OF VOLUNTARY RECEPTION UNDER SECTION 1 TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Writing in 1991, by which date there had been more than 35 child abuse inquiries from Maria Colwell in 1974 onwards, it is hard to understand why so few similar tragedies were reported in the years 1948 to 1971. It is true that we are now more aware of the prevalence of sexual abuse, that we have more sophisticated methods of detecting it and that current evidence from adults shows that such abuse was widespread, but concealed, in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. However concern about the age-old problem of deliberate physical assaults, causing lasting injury to children from babyhood upwards, was brought to the forefront in America by Ruth and Henry Kempe in 1962²⁶⁹. Till then, in England, it was commonly supposed that physical cruelty was dying out. The Association of Children's Officers had said publicly in 1952, "it is associated with drunkenness which is much diminished in recent years". The occurrence of repeated fractures in children brought to Great Ormond Street Hospital in London had been noted by Johnson in 1868, but he attributed them to bone defects associated with rickets²⁷⁰. The children's officers first took notice of the American concern in 1965. This was about the 'battered baby syndrome', not particularly sexual abuse. It seems extraordinary that coroners' inquests in the nineteen-fifties did not record non-accidental death of children on anything like the same scale as in the nineteen-nineties. Some authorities think that the non-accidental nature of injuries was not noticed so often in earlier years by doctors completing death certificates nor by coroners' officers and police officers concerned. These authorities take the view that many non-accidental deaths of children used to be explained away by their parents or others as having been

caused by accident or from natural causes. Judging from the nature of the injuries sustained, for example by Kimberly Carlile, it is hard to believe that children suffered similar death in earlier decades without doctors, police and coroners noticing anything untoward. Throughout the existence of children's departments there were two schools of thought about the use of 'voluntary' reception for children who were ill-used or neglected. Some authorities persuaded parents to let children considered to be at risk be received quietly into care. This school of thought considered it less damaging to the parents' self-esteem and less traumatic for the children. Of course there was then a possibility that the parents might exercise their right to take over care of the children again, possibly uprooting them suddenly from surroundings and people whom they had begun to love. Some of this school of thought tended to make somewhat dubious use of the authority's power to assume parental rights, often on the grounds that the parents' habits and mode of life made them unfit to resume care. This procedure needed no evidential test, unless, exceptionally, an alert councillor demanded to know the precise facts upon which the officer's recommendation was made. Even so, there was no one present to listen to the evidence, test it by cross-examination and put the parents' opposing views to the committee. If the parents had signed consent to the assumption of parental rights the authority was not even obliged to tell them of their right to appeal to a court against the authority's action. The opposite school of thought considered that, except when a consultant was of the opinion that a parent was suffering from a psychiatric illness, clearly bringing the circumstances within the terms of Section 1, the proper course was to bring the children before the courts as being in need of care or protection. This course was, they thought, fairer to all parties. The parents were not left in the dark about their rights, the children were not deprived of familiar people, places and the customs of a

life-time without a properly presented and argued case before an independent tribunal, during which the children often had the satisfaction of seeing their parents vigorously resist the proposal for them to be 'put away'. If a child was then committed to the care of the local authority, at least he knew that his parents had not abandoned him. Those looking after him could explain that it was the court's decision and could discuss what the parents would have to do to get him back home. Children's officers of the latter school were nonplussed by one interpretation of the otherwise wholesome provision in Sub-Section 1(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act of 1969 which defined care, proceedings and control. The sub-section provided that a court should not make a care order unless the child was unlikely to receive necessary care and control if the court did not make an order. Some people interpreted this to mean that if the parents then agreed to voluntary reception into care, the court could make no order unless the child had been found guilty of offences. It must be mentioned that those who drafted the Children Act 1948 expressed the view that no child of an age to understand could be received into care except by his own consent; a point of view which has since found no adherents anywhere.

7.22 THE INSPECTORATE'S PREFERENCE FOR VOLUNTARY CARE

The inspectors seemed to influence local authorities to do their duty in a way which would minimise the risk of questions being asked in parliament about the way authorities were working under 'the advice and guidance' of the Home Secretary. The following notes are taken from inspectors' reports on a medium-sized authority which had fewer children in its care in proportion to its child population than the average for authorities with broadly comparable socio-economic conditions. This aroused anxiety, which lasted for a decade, in the inspectors who, in 1956, made a special study of one child care officer and one area office:

"In the previous year 146 children had been the subject of applications for reception into care of whom 30 had been received. All applications were carefully investigated and, where preliminary diagnosis of need was established, over 30% were referred to other agencies in the first instance; to home helps, probation service, moral welfare workers, the NSPCC or other voluntary agencies. In turn these agencies were referring children to the children's department. Those not received into care were assisted in making alternative arrangements which were fully described in the care papers with sufficient follow-up to ensure that alternatives were working satisfactorily. The source of enquiries about relatives were made sometimes with the assistance of other local authorities. A neighbour may be enrolled as a home help. The significant thing is that, out of 146 children, one area officer and two child care officers helped 70 children to have arrangements made for them which did not involve reception into care. Nearly all of those received into care, except through the courts, went straight to short-stay foster homes."

This passage refers to 70 children who were helped satisfactorily without reception into care and 30 who were received. Since there were 140 children altogether who were the subjects of applications it must be assumed that the other 40 applications were withdrawn by the applicants during the initial interview. Applicants often saw reception as the sole purpose of children's departments. For example, a row with the landlord, a hint of a parent's possible admission to hospital or a child's act of misbehaviour may cause a parent to ask initially for reception into care where another parent, in similar circumstances, might have gone to the citizens' advice bureau. A conscientious department would record any inquiry of this nature in its statistics. The inspectors' concern was again aroused in 1963 and they conducted a further survey of the department's work. They concluded that the selection of cases for reception into care was 'basically sound'.

"This step is taken far too lightly in other authorities who focus on protection for the individual child without considering the eventual effect but this local authority probably takes serious risks in refusing the pleas of distracted parents. We fear any tragedy would bring the department into disrepute and a more moderate policy would probably be a more prudent course. Child care officers of the lowest rank can decide to refuse an application for reception into care. We think this is very questionable. It seems to us the decision to refuse admission into care is equally as important as the decision to accept into care."

The superintending inspector next met the children's committee and subsequently wrote to the council's chief executive saying that the council had a primary duty to receive children into care when need arose. It was right to emphasise parental responsibility but the committee would do well to give thought from time to time to reasons for refusal. The streamlined machine was equipped with safeguards and was carefully watched, caution was required lest change in personnel should leave it in the hands of people who did not appreciate the underlying human fallibility. It is difficult to understand what the inspectors meant about, 'refusing the pleas of distracted parents' when the survey in 1956 had shown such careful attention and following up. The inspectorate based its criticism not on anything they saw (except that main grade social workers under close general supervision of an area officer sitting in the same room could, if they saw fit, make arrangements other than reception into care). Clearly, if the parents were 'distracted' there were many ways in which they could force the authority to make further arrangements including, possibly, reception into care. The inspectors based their concern merely on the statistics showing the proportion of the child population in care. These were 4.8 per thousand in 1956 and 3.0 per thousand in 1963 when the backlog of evacuees and of 'children who wait', inherited from the public assistance committee, attained adulthood and passed out of the statistics. In 1963 Lancashire, in a different Home Office region, had 2.7 children in care per thousand. Study of the 35 child abuse inquiries does not suggest that the tragedies they record were generally caused by social workers ignoring the pleas of distracted parents. In most instances the parents were resistant to such intervention.

7.23 GROUNDS FOR INSPECTORS' ANXIETIES

It must be acknowledged that the inspectors (along with the Home Secretary, the councillors, the parents, the children's officers, the child care officers and not least, the children) had good reason for anxious consideration of the factors to be taken into account in deciding whether or not a child in particular circumstances should be received into care. It was the constant central preoccupation of children's officers. Never a week passed without their having to address the issue in a slightly new guise. On the one hand there was the known distress occasioned to children who got into the care system: they would be likely to be removed for the time being from most familiar things and be put into a frightening world of strangers where they did not even know, at first, what word was used to describe the lavatory. Usually some disaster to the parental home had preceded reception into care. Often there was no assurance about how soon they would go home, if ever. Some children, especially little ones, wondered if their parents had deserted them or died. For the decision maker there was, too, the harsh lesson of experience that in a few cases careless receptions resulted in impairment of the parents' capacity to give proper care ever again. It happened that parents could form fresh relationships, tending to forget their former ones and to adopt ways of life in which there was no room for the children. These thoughts are unpalatable. A distinguished children's officer from a highly reputable department said she was going to London on 'a mother hunt', meaning that she was hoping to contact parents who had not maintained contact with their children. People might say 'parents like that are no good to their children', an observation far too sweeping to be of any value without fuller mitigation. Those making the decision whether or not to receive a child must weigh the possible risks of declining to intervene. Parents then park a child in unsafe, undesirable surroundings, abandon them or do violence

to them or, more likely, to themselves. Over and above these assessable risks was the spectre of pure chance. A child whose possible reception had been discussed, might, with their approval, end up staying for a few days with loved grandparents who wanted to help. If, by mischance, the child lost his life the coroner could be told, "If the children's officer had agreed to reception the child would be alive today". Those exercising this awesome responsibility knew that every new day was one in which such misfortune might occur. For the children's sake they had to continue what is nowadays described as 'the management of risk'. The inspectors spoke of 'distracted parents' but it is difficult to think of circumstances in which their distress could be relived by voluntary removal of a child except as part of a plan to deal with the reasons for their distress. Where it is suspected that a child is being abused by someone in his family or surroundings it is no good brushing the problem under the carpet by removing him from home except by due process of law and careful investigation with a view to appropriate legal action, counselling and restoration as quickly as is considered safe. A child's own disruptive behaviour is rarely put right by the flaccid response of voluntary reception, leaving the basic dysfunction unattended. There might however be a case for respite care as part of a plan agreed with the parents actively tackling the basic problem. But even here it is preferable to use the machinery established for coping with the specific problem. If this is done by means of a care order the parents and child can have a court hearing with protection of their legal rights. Maladjusted children first need attention to their whole families by marriage guidance, psychiatric services or special educational treatment rather than by removing into care, possibly for the rest of their childhood. Delinquent children or those beyond control should have the right to have their alleged misdemeanours proved objectively by a court before being deprived of their liberty. It is possible

that the inspectors' reference to 'distracted parents' included those suffering from a clinically diagnosed psychiatric illness. In such a case an authority might have a duty to receive into care if, for example, it was a single parent family without relatives in this country willing to care. In such a case, the condition of 'distraction' can only be assessed by a person with psychiatric knowledge and it would be foolish to receive the child without simultaneously establishing that plans were in hand for the parents' treatment leaving room for the child's subsequent restoration to parental care, if appropriate. The inspectors also wrote of the risk of 'bringing the department into disrepute'. The risk of bringing himself and his hospital into disrepute must be present in the mind of every surgeon in deciding whether or not to operate. He still has to decide fearlessly on the evidence, putting the patient's interest first without regard for the possibility of damaging his reputation if he decided wrongly and the patient dies. In child care this risk of damage to reputation should be faced on the best evidence and not result in reception into care except when the evidence shows that it is in the child's interest.

7.24 AN EXAMPLE OF A MISJUDGED RECEPTION INTO CARE

Many years after the event a person who had, as a child been received into care, gave her account of the experience. The text has been checked and amended by the informant, who trained as a social worker after her own children had grown up. It is reproduced here with her consent. In 1949 the Croydon children's department prided itself on not acceding to applications for reception into care before the most careful study of possible alternatives. The policy might have been considered brash and simplistic. In those early days there were no arrangements to follow up the subsequent plight of families to whom admission was declined unless they reapplied. There was frequent conflict with others like

the police, the NSPCC and medical social workers over the criteria applied to applications for care. The authority believed that if they were at fault then perhaps it was for leaning too far against reception into care rather than the opposite. They foresaw and accepted the risk that one day they might face the coroner if, by chance, a child came to harm. In November 1982 the informant told how Croydon had been far too ready to accede to a parental request for reception, in consequence of which the children might unnecessarily be deprived of familial care and subjected to weeks of anxiety. Here is her story:

"When my brother was six and I was nine years old we spent about six weeks in a Croydon children's home. I felt very protective towards my brother who had to sit at a different table and was, I thought, given different food. Our mother went into hospital some weeks before my sister, her third child, was born. After we had been in the home for a few days our parents met us for a few minutes as we came out of the primary school. My parents believed that they were not supposed to visit us in the home because when I had been in a nearby hospital for a tonsillectomy two years earlier, visits had not been allowed. When my mother was sent home from hospital to wait until she started labour, she did not ask to have us home because she feared she might have great difficulty in persuading us to return to the home and because she believed children were very adaptable and she hoped we had settled into a routine in the home which she didn't wish to disturb. She went through a miserable few weeks of days spent in a very quiet house. After we had seen our parents outside the school I asked Matron when we could go home and was told, not unkindly, "You can't return home until the children's officer decides". After six weeks we returned home a few days after the baby's birth.

"I think the worst thing about going to the homes was that we had to go to a different school although our own primary school was only a bus ride away. My mother found the authority was not up to her standard. I remember my teacher asked me why my legs were bandaged. I think this was impetigo but my mother insists it was because we were made to bath ourselves and did not dry properly so that our skin was chapped. It took months to heal and I still have faint scars. My mother says that when she got us home my brother badly needed a haircut and she wanted to clean us both up. She made me look pretty with new clothes and ribbon in my hair. She does not remember our having any adverse reactions such as behaviour problems. We loved the new baby sister and showed no jealousy.

"Part of the reason my parents asked the council to look after us was that my father worked a lot of overtime. He had to leave home before it was time for us to go to school and might not return home

until 10pm. My parents believed it was illegal to leave children under twelve alone in the house for even a short time. They felt it would be asking too much of a neighbour to keep an eye on us after school if father was late.

"It is questionable whether we would have been received into care if full enquiries had been made. It was term time and we both attended primary school. Our maternal grandparents lived in a nine-roomed house two doors away. My mother was the oldest of eight children and four of my maternal uncles and aunts were still living at home. We were friends with them and would have found it fun to go and stay with them. In any event, the proximity of our grandparents disposes of any fear that we could not have been properly provided for if my father had not been at home.

"Mother responded to her rather relaxed upbringing as the oldest of eight children by conducting her own household to an ordered routine and that is why she preferred to put us into the home rather than with her own parents whose large family received what she regarded as a chaotic upbringing. In any case, she didn't like to ask her mother because there were tensions in the family and the request might have been rebuffed, at least in the first instance."

When this account was shown to the informant she checked it with her parents and added this comment:

"Although my mother obviously regrets what she did and realises her assumptions were wrong, she still sees her actions as being in accordance with the prevailing ideas of child care in 1949. That is that adults knew what was best for children without question and **routine** was all important. My parents are amazed to learn that what happened in 1949 constituted 'being received into care'. They did not see it like that. They were advised by the antenatal clinic to apply to the children's department. They had to pay the council and saw it as their right to use the services available for a fee. It was my father who went to the town hall, on the principle that the man of the house should deal with figures in authority. He says he was not questioned very much and his request was granted without my mother being seen at all."

The conclusion is that although it might have transpired that the children's father was repeatedly out doing compulsory overtime in the evenings and it might also have transpired that the grandparents were reluctant to help and also that there were no neighbours willing to help, none of these possible sources of help were identified, let alone explored. The antenatal clinic and the interviewing officer gave the parents the impression that institutional care was normal: indeed that it was a 'welfare right'.

7.25 DEFINING THE AUTHORITY'S DUTY

The duty of public assistance committees respecting indigent children before 1948 was the historic one, literally unchanged since it was first enacted under Elizabeth I. The Curtis Committee showed, in paragraphs 12 to 18 of their report, that the duty reflected a spirit which, they were glad to say, was not characteristic of the care given by local authorities, although it may have hindered progress. By some remarkable legal acrobatics the Public Assistance Order of 1930 introduced words which significantly altered the intentions of the parliamentarians which had first enacted them. The order showed ways in which children might be maintained under the poor law. Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1929 encouraged authorities to look after children under powers exercised by education committees or health committees rather than by public assistance committees. However, none of these powers authorised them to maintain healthy children over the age of except under the poor law. Section 53 of the Poor Law Act authorised the authority to provide 'separate schools' which, by Article 6 of the Public Assistance Order 1930, fell within the definition of 'children's home'. Section 54 authorised the sending of pauper children to 'certified schools' without the formality of a court order. Under Section 58 of the Poor Law Act 1930, the authority could send a deaf or blind child to an appropriate special school. Sub Section 52(3) deemed to be maintained by the council any child whom they boarded out. Section 67 enabled an authority to contribute by way of subscription towards the maintenance of any institution approved by the Minister of Health as 'calculated to render useful aid in the administration of relief of the poor'. This last section was the authority for maintaining children in voluntary homes other than approved schools.

Inheriting this ingenious rag-bag of legislation, the government consulted the draftsmen. The preparation of the draft of the Children Act 1948 by parliamentary counsel and through parliament is recorded in four volumes entitled 'Children Act 1948'. They were in the archives of the Department of Health and Social Security at Avon House, Southwark. They may have been moved to the Public Record Office. The draftsmen were first asked to provide for children whose parents were 'unable to keep and maintain them' and to describe the authority's duty as 'to take children into care'. The instructions also asked for a clause enabling courts to commit to the care of a local authority (on the application of that authority) a child whose parents were dead and who had deserted the child or who were unfit by reason of 'habits or mode of life' and also those whose parents were permanently bedridden or disabled, provided that parent (and the other parent, if traceable) agreed. In proposing legislation for a court to commit to an authority's care a child whose parents came within the ambit of Section 52 of the Poor Law Act 1930, the civil servants were following recommendation 4 of the Curtis Report, and also anticipating recommendation 40 of the Short Committee that the power to transfer rights from a parent to a local authority should only be vested in a court. In the event this proposal was dropped from the 1948 Children Bill. Section 2 of the 1948 act continued, with modifications, the power of the authority to assume parental rights by its own resolution, subject to appeal to a court. Both before 1948 and afterwards, the authority's power was limited to instances in which the child was already receiving 'indoor relief', subsequently 'being in care' away from his parents. Counsel replied to the Home Office saying that he did not understand the distinction between children who were and children who were not the subjects of parental rights resolutions, nor did he understand the relationship between

the proposals for taking into care and those for assuming parental rights.

"A local authority cannot adequately care for a child unless it has at any rate some parental rights ... somebody has to be able to authorise an operation. You will say that there is nothing new in this and that poor law children have in the past had their appendices removed other than under a Section 52 resolution, but if this is so, what are the cases in which there should be something analogous to such a resolution?"

Continuing, counsel wrote that he was quite unable to work out the relationship between the two paragraphs of the Home Office memorandum; first, the conditions for reception into care and secondly the grounds for assumption of parental rights. He said the matter was further complicated by the request for a provision enabling an authority to apply to a court to commit to their care as a 'fit person' a child already in their care whose parents were unfit by the habits or mode of life or by the mental deficiency of one or both parents to have control of the child. Counsel's response continued:

"I make bold to put forward ... the suggestion that the simple structure would be to have ... sub clause 1(3) as I have drafted it and to add a provision for anyone who does not like the assumption of authority ... being enabled to go to court and get an order that the duty of the authority is to cease. This is ... giving effect to the Curtis Committee's recommendation that every deprived child ought to have a proper guardian and I do not know whether you will consider that an advantage or a disadvantage."

The original Home Office request was for the local authority's duty to be defined as 'to provide for care, maintenance, accommodation and upbringing'. The draftsmen came back with 'to provide for accommodation and care'. The Home Office asked for reversion to the form in their original request. Counsel responded:

"While the duty imposed on the local authority under Sub-Section 1(1) continues the authority should have the same rights and powers and liabilities as a parent would have and the child should continue in the care of the authority notwithstanding any claim by the parent."

The Home Office replied, "This will not do". Many of the children came into care for short periods. The Curtis Committee thought the procedure under

Section 52 of the Poor Law Act was objectionable. Voluntary societies did not have parental rights. In the next draft counsel dropped sub-clause 1(3) of the first draft which would have conferred parental rights upon the local authority over any child who was, with parental consent, received voluntarily into care. The third and fourth drafts used the expression **take** into their care. The fifth draft used, for the first time, the expression **receive** into care. There is no written comment on the change at this stage, not even (as was customary) a note in pencil of an oral discussion. In November 1947 the Home Office sent in confidence to local authorities a draft circular concerning 'Provisions in substitution for those of the Poor Law Act 1930 relating to children dealt with otherwise than by out relief'. In paragraph 3 of the draft circular (and in paragraph 3 of a communication to local authority associations) the duty was defined as to **take**. Paragraph 7 said that the assumption of parental rights would be broadly on the lines of Section 52 of the Poor Law Act but that the consent of parents, if accessible, would be required. By January 1948 the emphasis had shifted to **receiving** a child rather than **taking**. The white paper summarising the provisions of the bill used the expression 'receive into care'. It is unclear from the records who initiated this change. Some printed notes on clauses of the Children Bill dated 3 March 1948 said:

"Clause 1 does not empower a local authority to 'receive' a child into their care against the wishes of a parent or other person, in whose charge he is or for that matter against the child's wishes if he is of an age to form or express a proper opinion on the matter."

"It may be argued that an unsuitable parent or guardian should not in any event be empowered to take over the care of his child. The answer is that the rights and powers of parents must be safeguarded and it would be wrong to give local authorities discretionary power at large to deprive them of the right of custody of their children. The local authority's remedy is to assume parental rights or to apply to a court under the 'care or protection' provisions."

"We have met the criticisms of the Curtis Committee by providing for a parent to be told and to be entitled to appeal unless he has already

consented. A child subject to a parental rights resolution who is allowed to be under the control of a parent, guardian, relative or friend will remain in the care of a local authority under Section 1 ... they can take the child back at any time."

There was still some doubt in the Home Office. An assistant secretary asked:

"Will 'receive' cover all cases? Should it not be 'take' to enable a local authority to take away a child not brought to them ... where intervention is necessary?"

There is no record of any response by counsel to this point and the measure was enacted with the local authority's duty defined as to **receive**. In practice, this has not proved an impediment to an authority's implementing its duty to receive into care a child whose welfare requires it. It is not unlawful for a private individual to take possession of a child of tender years who is found unattended and in need of shelter or of protection from common physical dangers. To assume such possession is not unlawful since whoever does so has the defence of necessity to any civil or criminal action alleging trespass to the person of the child or of trespass to the rights of the parent. Nor is it unlawful to take care for the time being of an older child who is unattended and who is of an age to consent to being informally received for the time being into the care of an older person. A purist, coming upon a child of tender years who appeared to be lost or abandoned would 'take care' of it as any responsible person would. An alternative would be to invite a constable to put a child into a place of safety or to invite a magistrate to execute an order authorising the removal of the child to such a place. In each instance this would be on the grounds that the child was in need of care or control. The difficulty envisaged by the assistant secretary is not, in practice, insurmountable. When the Children Act 1948 received the Royal Assent the duty enshrined in Section 1 was to **receive** a child into care. Part I of the act was, however, headed, 'Duty of Local Authorities to Assume Care of Children'. This was no doubt because Part I included Section 5 which required authorities to act as a 'fit person' to whom courts might commit

children to care. On 8 July 1948 the Home Office issued Circular 160/48 introducing the new act. The circular was, in the main, drafted meticulously in describing the duty under Section 1 to receive. Unhappily it lapsed, in paragraph 6, which began ' ... When a child is **taken** into care by a local authority ... ' (emphasis added). This single sentence, published as it was on the day after the act came into force, with its use of the verb 'to take' had a profound and continuing effect on the ethos of the child care service and upon the lives of thousands of children.

7.27 TO 'RECEIVE' OR TO 'TAKE'

It is too late to do more than speculate why the word 'take' appeared in paragraph 6 of the circular. Was it human error or was it a conspiracy? The history of statutory child care since 1948 has been dogged by this misunderstanding. Private individuals and many representatives of public opinion have assumed that the authority had the power and the duty to 'take' a child into care. It is true that **anyone** can apply to a magistrate for an order to 'take' a child to a place of safety. That power was not granted under the Children Act 1948 which merely authorises the authority to 'receive' a child with the consent of the person who has possession of him for the time being. However, many people think that the two verbs are synonymous. A possible explanation is that those who drafted the circular were influenced by Sir Ernest Gowers' preference for short, simple, Anglo Saxon words rather than those of Norman French origin which were often rather longer and less familiar to the common reader. Earlier in 1948 he had published 'Plain Words' at the invitation of the Treasury as a contribution to the improvement of the English used in documents ¹³⁷. He described as 'legal English' the words used in acts of parliament to convey a precise meaning, caused by the necessity to be

unambiguous. That did not mean that they were readily intelligible: on the contrary, the nearer you got to precision the further you were likely to get from intelligibility. The parliamentary draftsman had to try to imagine every possible combination of circumstances to which his words might apply and every conceivable misinterpretation that might be put upon them. He must limit by definition words with a dangerously large penumbra. Sir Ernest said:

"It used to be a rule in the (Civil) Service that when laws were brought to the notice of those affected by them the actual words of the statute must be used; in no other way could the official be sure of escaping the imputation of putting his own interpretation on the law (but) if the official is tied to the words of the law ... how is the man in the street to be helped to understand it?"

Gowers laid down some guiding principles:

- 1 Use the simplest language.
- 2 Avoid technical terms.
- 3 Do not try to give all the details of the law.
- 4 State the essentials in your own words and not the words of the Act.
- 5 Explain that your words are only approximations and tell the reader where he can find fuller information.
- 6 If two words convey your meaning equally well, choose the common one, rather than the less common. Do not, for example, say 'inform' when you mean 'tell'.

In paragraph 13 of chapter 3 of Gower's book, most of the words cited put a flavour of legalism into any document in which they are used. Gowers continued:

"The precept to choose the familiar word (which is probably also the short one) must of course be followed with discretion ... If the choice is between two words that convey a writer's meaning equally well, one short and familiar and the other long and unusual, of course the short and familiar should be preferred. But one that is long and unusual should not be rejected merely on that account, if it is more apt in meaning."

In chapter 7, 'Choice of Words', Gowers listed 35 words:

" ... that are overworked in official documents and beside them some useful change bowlers. I am not, of course, suggesting that they are necessarily synonyms of the words placed opposite to them or that they ought not ever to be used".

Here are 11 of these words:

Assist	Help
Commence	Begin
Inform	Tell
Initiate	Begin : Start
Locality	Place
Proceed	Go
Render	Make
Reside	Live
Sufficient	Enough
Terminate	End
Transmit	Send

It will be seen that most of the words in the first column derive from Norman French and those in the second column are mostly Anglo Saxon. Gowers implied that they were so close to being synonymous that to use a word from the second column would generally be preferable and would be unlikely to alter the sense of the passage in which it was used. Gowers' complete list did not include **take** as a substitute for **receive**. As has been shown, the dictionary draws a distinction between their respective meanings: a distinction which went to the root of the local authority's duty under section 1. However, it seems likely that the impact which Gowers' work had upon the civil service caused those who drafted circular 160/48 to carry the process too far and to change **receive** to **take** in the statute in the circular. Gowers had in any case recommended in his fifth principle that it should be explained when the words were only approximations and that the reader should be told where fuller information could be found. This was done at the first annual conference of the Association of Children's Officers in October 1950 when John Ross, Assistant Under Secretary, drew attention to the distinction when replying to a question about the interpretation of Section 1. Not every practitioner saw any significance in the distinction. One of the most important advocates for preserving this vital definition was John Stroud in his

prolific contribution to the literature of child care. There was a substantial group of child care workers who conceived their duty under Section 1 as being to **take** children into care: that is to initiate a rescue operation which, although it could not be carried out against the parent's wishes, nevertheless seemed desirable in itself and was one in which the parents' wishes could justifiably be assumed, or overborne by persuasion. The word **take** in circular 160/48 had a profound effect on the way in which child care workers saw their duty under Section 1, and the effects of that understanding of the statute can still be seen now, forty years later.

7.28 SECTION 1 AS A THREAT

Few workers in the field can have failed to hear the words, 'in that case we shall have to take the children into care' used as a threat. It has been said to parents who get into rent arrears and face eviction; to parents whose way of life is nomadic or unhygienic; to those in marital discord who threaten to separate. Use of the threat has been cogently and systematically urged by some local authority lawyers and housing officers as a means of enforcing payment of rent. But the most powerful consequence of this crucial misinterpretation of the statute is seen by its effect upon people in caring roles and professions outside the children's and social services departments. Clergy, councillors, doctors, health visitors, journalists and policemen, misunderstanding parliament's intention, have mistakenly assumed that the authorities had a power and a duty to **take** children into care without judicial intervention. If authorities did not **exercise** this assumed power, they might be supposed to be dragging their feet or deliberately excluding children from care to reduce the burden of maintaining them at public expense.

C H A P T E R E I G H T

FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN ON RECEPTION TO CARE

"The need of a deprived child is a good substitute for a home with affection and personal interest, stability, opportunity of making the best of his abilities and a share in the communal life of a small group in a home environment."

The Curtis Report
Paragraph 427

8. 1 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Three of the major recommendations of the Curtis Committee stand out:

- 1 The key appointment of the children's officer.
- 2 The development of boarding out.
- 3 The establishment of reception centres in all areas (to) serve as places of safety, remand homes for small children and places of preparation for boarding out or a children's home.

In paragraphs 482-283 the committee said, "we do not consider that children who come into (care) should be immediately placed in the Home in which they are to remain". Their two reasons were:

- 1 "Medical, to test for infection and continence of urine and faeces."
- 2 "Observation, to see whether the child is normal and well adjusted to society or requires some special treatment to restore him to normality."

However, the children were not to be retained in a reception centre for more than a few weeks at the outside. Such homes could also be used for children who came into care for a short time during temporary parental incapacity. The committee observed that many poor law authorities had set up 'receiving homes', often a part of a workhouse, to serve these two purposes and to protect children in long term care from having their lives disrupted by coming and going of

strange children. Similar arrangements were needed during the war for evacuated children who presented exceptional problems in foster homes (paragraph 482). There should be separate reception nurseries or nursery accommodation in reception homes (paragraph 483). Every nursery should have not less than 25% of single sleeping rooms for infants under twelve months where they could be nursed separately if necessary (paragraph 481). There is no record of discussion of this surprising recommendation. It was not repeated in the Home Secretary's memorandum on residential nurseries, which simply said, in a note on night nurseries, 'small rooms desirable'. Nurseries taking babies generally had one or more 'baby rooms' and a sick baby was often nursed in a room alone, for quiet and to reduce cross-infection.

8. 2 THE STATUTORY DUTY TO PROVIDE RECEPTION FACILITIES

Those who drafted the 1948 act adopted recommendation 33 and attached prime importance to reception facilities. Sub Section 15(2) provided that:

" ... homes shall include separate accommodation for the temporary reception of children, with, in particular, the necessary facilities for observation of their physical and mental condition."

This was mandatory. However, Sub Section 15(3) authorised the use, by arrangement, of reception facilities of other authorities: a particularly sensible arrangement having regard to the limited needs of some very small local authorities. Sub Section 15(4) enabled the Secretary of State to make regulations for local authorities to consult the Secretary of State about the appointment of a person in charge of a reception home and to limit the time that a child should remain in such a home. This power was not used: instead the Administration of Children's Homes Regulations of 1951 applied to reception homes as well as to the generality of homes and were not so detailed as had been envisaged by Sub Section 15(4). Home Office circular 160 of 1948 expressed the hope that:

" ... local authorities who have not already done so, will now make adequate provision for reception accommodation, so that, normally, every child coming into the care of a local authority may pass through a reception centre, where the method of treatment best suited to his needs can be ascertained."

8. 3 AN EARLY RECEPTION CENTRE

A pilot reception centre had been set up in October 1947 by the Caldecott Community at Mersham in Kent in co-operation with the county council. A report about this project was circulated to children's officers in 1948. From 1949 boys aged 2 to 12 and girls aged 2 to 15 went to Mersham through the Kent children's department, generally staying about three weeks. They were observed by trained staff, examined by a physician and a psychiatrist and tested by a psychologist. A case conference then recommended a plan for each child's future care. In 1951 the experiment ended and the county opened its own reception centre.

8. 4 A SAMPLE RECEPTION CENTRE REPORT

An example of a case conference report, prepared in mid 1950 at the Mersham Reception Centre was published in the first report of the Kent children's committee.

"MARION ... Aged nine years, nine months."
"REPORT"

"Referred on 23 May 1950 by the Children's Officer for advice regarding placement.

"Problem: The child of a mentally defective woman who was brought up by her maternal grandmother until last November. Grandmother almost blind for two years. Relatives interested, but unable to provide a permanent home.

"Paralysis of left side from birth, treated for first four years and more recently with occupational and physiotherapy. Very backward at school but tries hard. Has acquired some practical skills (weaving, basketry, etc) at occupation class. Tries hard and has a vefy pleasant disposition.

"FINDINGS AT THE RECEPTION CENTRE"

"Behaviour: Marion is an attractive little girl with curly hair and blue eyes. She is always smiling and cheerful. She is acutely aware of her disability and in public dislikes using her left hand. Alone she is quite ambitious and will do more than one would think possible. She is willing and co-operative, and very much likes to do things to be appreciated. In the house she is slow but can do small tasks efficiently. She has a pleasant disposition and other children are kind and considerate with her. She especially likes to be with younger children and she is good with them. In school she is backward but she tries conscientiously and never gives any trouble. She likes handwork, knits and attempts to sew.

"She enjoys the usual imaginative games that little girls play with dolls but she never joins in any organised games or attempts to dance. On the whole she manages quite well at meals and she can dress and undress herself, and make her bed reasonably well.

"PSYCHOLOGICAL FINDINGS"

"IQ 63 on the Revised Stanford-Binet Scale, Form L. Mental age 6 years, 2 months. Of dull intelligence. On Progressive Matrices, 1947 - D group: Koh's Block Design Test - Mental age 5 years, 7 months: Porteous Mazes - Mental age six years, five months.

"Undoubtedly she is seriously handicapped both mentally and physically. She needs special education for both handicaps. Is most likely to succeed in simple routine tasks. At present seems educable in a special school.

"MEDICAL EXAMINATION"

"Physical: She is good looking, with a left hemiplegia chiefly disabling her left hand. She walks fairly well with a slight limp and dragging of the foot. She shows a reluctance to use her left hand and with encouragement can use it, much more than she chooses to.

"PSYCHIATRIC"

"She is a cheerful child who seems naturally affectionate and ready to accept things as they are. She will need continued expert training to use her left hand adequately. She needs help educationally because she is very backward. She does not give the impression of being fundamentally nearly as dull as her IQ 63 on Stanford-Binet tests, presumably because of her very pleasing personality.

"RECOMMENDATIONS"

- 1 "Should be ascertained as a pupil with a dual defect, i.e., educationally sub-normal and physically defective.

2 "Would be suitable for one of the Shaftesbury Society's
Homes or for Groom's Crippleage.

3 "Temporary placement in one of Kent County Council's
Homes such as ... "

This report highlights features which characterised the approach of the child care service. **First**, there is nothing about the grandmother except that she brought up Marion even after she became nearly blind; nothing about the mother except that she is mentally defective; nothing about the father; nothing about the relatives except that they were interested. **Secondly**, the report describes the kind of care for which Marion 'would be suitable', not what kind of care might be suitable for Marion. **Thirdly**, the recommendation is for a move into yet another children's home, taking it for granted that there will be administrative delay in effecting admission to the Shaftesbury Society or Groom's Crippleage. **Fourthly**, although from the description of Marion she has an equable temperament and a desire to cope with her handicap, the report does not canvass the possibility of support for the 'interested' relatives and for the old lady who has been a mother to her for as long as Marion can remember (and, from the description of Marion's characteristics, seems to have done a good job) or for the possibility of seeking permanent care for her in a private family. Marion is a sombre example of the well meaning, pretentious machinery which decided for what kind of institution a child was 'suitable'.

8. 5 THE MEMORANDUM OF GUIDANCE ON RECEPTION CENTRES

The memorandum was the first task undertaken by the Secretary of State's advisory council ¹⁹³. This became the model for reception facilities throughout the 23 years. Acting on Sir Ernest Gowers' precepts, the word **centres** replaced the statutory word **facilities**. Presumably the simpler choice, reception **home** insufficiently emphasised the distinction between the ordinary children's homes

and the new projects which the act required. The words **reception centres** produced some laughable misunderstandings among elderly councillors who confused them with the **reception areas** to which mothers and children had been evacuated during the war. The memorandum referred in its title to **accommodation** not **facilities**, thus perpetuating the group residential ethos which Curtis inherited from the poor law and which the advisory council bequeathed to children's departments. Again, the child care service was depicted as a reservoir of children who would normally be cared for in groups by salaried employees, not as a dynamic mode of intervention to preserve or restore a child's upbringing. The memorandum made these points in the paragraphs indicated:

Paragraph 1 : The best method of providing a substitute home cannot be decided without close study of the newly-admitted child's needs so provision must be made for his reception and temporary accommodation in a place with facilities for enquiry into his health, personality, conduct, intellectual capacity, emotional state and social history and for observation by skilled staff.

Paragraph 2 : When a child is removed by a constable or magistrate's order to a place of safety it should, so far as practicable, be to a reception centre.

Paragraph 3 : Reception centres are necessarily of a somewhat experimental nature.

Paragraph 4 : They should provide for both sexes.

Paragraph 4 referred to those newly-admitted children who were unlikely to remain in care for more than six months. The normal age range was to be from the second to the fourteenth birthday for boys and from the second to the seventeenth for girls. Children under two might exceptionally be admitted if accompanied by brothers or sisters. Separate reception centres were to be provided for boys over fifteen and also, where numbers justified it, for adolescent girls who were unsuitable for the normal type of mixed reception centre. These two sets of single-sex establishments would usually have to be provided jointly by two or more authorities, possibly near enough to a main

reception centre to be served conveniently by the same specialist staff.

Paragraph 5 : Girls might possibly be placed in a voluntary home ... "known to be dealing successfully with girls of this type".

Paragraph 6 : A child who had to be removed from a foster home might be admitted for assessment or reassessment.

Paragraph 7 : Reception centres should be available for use as places of safety for children removed from home by a constable or on a magistrate's order.

Paragraph 8 : Allegedly delinquent children under twelve might be remanded to a reception centre instead of to a remand home in accordance with the recommendation in paragraph 501 of Curtis.

Paragraph 9 : Children coming into care from known satisfactory homes for short periods should normally be boarded-out or go to a short-stay home: not pass through a reception centre.

Paragraph 10 : The risk of infection and the need for special staffing made separate nurseries necessary for children who had not reached their second birthday.

Paragraph 11 : Lengths of stay should not exceed four weeks "unless a longer stay is unavoidable for medical reasons". Three classes of children should be admitted:

- a for assessment
- b in emergency
- c as a place of safety.

Paragraphs 12 & 13 : A stay in an intermediate home (which might be combined with a short-stay home, "with the skilled staff of the reception centre continuing to interest themselves in the children"), would often be necessary. A child's condition might possibly change and invalidate an assessment. Some intermediate homes should be reserved for children whose assessment was in doubt.

Paragraph 14 : Reception centres should provide for not more than thirty children, normally keeping about five vacancies for emergencies. Surplus accommodation might be used for intermediate, short stay or special reception of adolescents.

Paragraphs 15 & 16 : Premises should be of attractive appearance, bright, homely and welcoming, with fair sized grounds, ample day rooms, a sick bay and a doctor's room. The child should have an explanation of what was happening to him.

Paragraph 17 : Cleansing and physical examination should preferably be in the sick bay but a child should not be rushed from the front door to the bathroom nor immediately asked questions for the records. His clothes and belongings should be treated with respect and he "should have time to look round the room into which he is

first brought, and possibly be given a meal there".

Paragraph 18 : Every child should be medically examined on admission.

Paragraph 19 : Information should be sought from the child (often the best source of information) and from relatives, teachers etc, and should include social and medical history, intellectual capacity, educational attainment, temperament, interests and hobbies and symptoms of emotional disturbance.

Paragraphs 20 & 21 : Observations should be continuously recorded. Final assessment should preferably be at a case conference with a person immediately responsible for implementing the consequent recommendation.

Paragraph 22 : Staff should comprise:

- a a teacher or social worker as head
- b one or more housemothers
- c one or more teachers, one qualified in physical education
- d a person with nursing experience
- e one or more play leaders
- f domestics
- g clerical assistance

The head and a designated deputy could also fulfil some of the functions listed from (a) to (e).

Paragraph 23 : It was essential to be able to call on the services of a good child guidance team.

Paragraph 24 : Trained boarding out officers should get to know the child and assess his family, "but it may be necessary in difficult cases to get help from a psychiatric social worker".

Paragraph 25 : Authorities should co-operate in joint use of reception centres to make best use of specialist staff and allow for quarantine from infectious illness.

8. 6 THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES' RESPONSE TO THE MEMORANDUM

The authorities responded broadly in one of two ways, similar to the polarised ways in which they tended to respond to the Curtis Committee's report. In 1950 the children's committee of the County Borough of Croydon, in a one minute discussion on the memorandum resolved "to pass to the next item on the agenda", since, as one member said with general approval, "the proposals to have all

these staff is ridiculous". On the other hand the equally conservative Devon County Council, with a keen chair of its children's committee, resolved to purchase a large house for a reception centre. The building proved inexorably resistant to repeated attempts at satisfactory adaptation. It lay on the coast remote from most of the majority of places from which the children came and more than sixty miles from one important urban centre. The place was taken into use immediately, before adaptation, for the new wave of children occasioned by the Children Act. It was formally opened two years later by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. Despite its disadvantageous features, it served well for twenty years until a place was purposely built near the centre of the county. By early 1951, fifteen reception centres had been opened and others were on the way. Premises which had been poor law receiving homes were being staffed and equipped for the new task. Joint sharing facilities were being agreed. The Home Office said that reception facilities were the keystone of child care service. A child previously seen as difficult might " ... become well adjusted and be safely boarded-out or placed in a family group home". Conversely, a child perceived as normal might prove to be " ... in need of prolonged treatment before behaviour difficulties could be overcome". The centre would enable placement of the child according to needs and capacity and in a home where staff were suited to his needs (paragraph 86). By the end of 1954 the 'Seventh Report of the Children's Department' recorded just over sixty reception centres, of which six were built for the purpose, serving about 77 local authorities, over half of all authorities in England, mostly the larger ones ²¹⁵. Facilities and organisation varied widely (paragraph 13). The majority of children in these reception homes went out to local schools. Not all centres held regular case conferences (paragraph 16). The Home Office acknowledged that the idea of a fixed maximum stay was inapplicable because the centres' task was to help the

children over the crisis of coming into care, possibly extending over several months (paragraph 17).

8. 7 MEASURING THE INCREASING USE OF RECEPTION HOMES

Command papers entitled 'Children in Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales' spanned from Cmd 8910, relating to 31 November 1952, to Cmd 5100, for March 1971, and record the number of children in reception facilities as follows:

TABLE 8.7
Numbers in Reception Centres
England & Wales : 1952 - 1971

TOTAL		In Care	In Reception	% In Reception
November	1952	64,682	1,167	1.80%
November	1953	65,309	1,041	1.59%
November	1954	64,560	1,086	1.68%
November	1955	No figures published		
March	1956	62,347	1,429	2.29%
March	1957	62,033	1,430	2.30%
March	1958	62,070	1,530	2.46%
March	1959	61,580	1,494	2.43%
March	1960	61,729	1,586	2.57%
March	1961	62,199	1,553	2.50%
March	1962	63,648	1,532	2.41%
March	1963	64,807	1,627	2.51%
March	1964	66,281	1,725	2.60%
March	1965	67,099	1,785	2.66%
March	1966	69,157	1,949	2.82%
March	1967	69,405	1,892	2.73%
March	1968	69,358	2,104	3.03%
March	1969	70,188	2,193	3.12%
March	1970	71,210	2,366	3.32%
March	1971	87,337	2,627	3.01%

Figures were not published separately for England and for Wales. Figures for 1971 are not comparable with previous years because they include Approved School Orders. Table 8.7 indicates that the number of children in reception centres reached and remained at a little over 1,000 from 1952 to 1954. There

are no figures for 1955 but by March 1956 they had increased to over 1,400 and remained at around 1,400 to 1,500 until 1962. It is hard to explain why they rose in an erratic curve between 1962 and 1968 and then in a dramatic crescendo until the separate child care service ended in 1971. As the table shows, the fluctuations were not matched by changes in the total number of children in care. The increased number in the last five years was accounted for by 33 new departments dynamically replacing the five original ones in Greater London, but the upward curve began in 1963-1964, before the new London boroughs were formed.

8. 8 'EMPTY BEDS'

Table 8.1 shows only the numbers resident in reception centres on the night of the census, the 'dipstick' or 'snapshot' which takes no account of fluctuations throughout the year. Nor does it measure the total provision on the night of the count. Some places follow Curtis and keep 25% or more places free for new admissions. Many spoke of backlogs of children whose needs had been assessed, awaiting the planned move to foster home, children's home, boarding school or back to parents. Authorities were understandably reluctant to move children out to yet another temporary placement before what was seen as a permanent arrangement. Children's officers had to defend what was seen by some directors of finance and some councillors as waste of resources through 'under-occupation'. The existence of a house committee could ensure that there was a small body of councillors in regular touch with the realities of the task. Such a well-informed body would present a convincing argument to their colleagues for keeping the place 'half-empty'. A good analogy is that of the fire service. It cannot tackle a new conflagration when all the appliances are already in use elsewhere. Where support from councillor on this issue was not forthcoming it was usual for 'extra

beds' to be set up when children had to be admitted in emergency. The factors determining maximum viable occupation of a reception home is not so much numbers of staff as their leadership, skill, reliability and morale. A kitchen run by a committed person cooking tenderly is as vital a component as a warden with a degree in psychology. Some reception group homes which were continually 'over-full' ran happily and looked after the children well. Others were permanently undermanned with transient house mothers and domestics: they might have to turn children away even when there were 'empty beds'.

8. 9 RECEPTION CENTRES AND REMAND HOMES

The current generation of child care workers, used to the term 'Observation and Assessment Centres', may be surprised at the distinction drawn, before 1971, between reception and remand facilities. Curtis approached it gingerly, saying that approved schools and remand homes were provided for children deprived of a normal home life even though there were, in these same institutions, delinquent children who had parents in touch: "Remand homes lie still nearer to the verge of our terms of reference than approved schools" (paragraph 501). The distinction between welfare jurisdiction and criminal justice jurisdiction was clear to the mid-nineteenth century reformers like the Reverend Sydney Turner and Mary Carpenter, who established separate reformatory schools and industrial schools, the latter for destitute or neglected children distinguishing, in Lord Hailsham's phrase, 'the deprived from the depraved'. As early as 1896 it was recommended that the two schools should be merged, but this was not welcomed by the reformatory managers, particularly because the departmental committee wanted an end to putting a few weeks imprisonment on any child committed to a reformatory. The Children & Young Persons Act of 1933 provided for juvenile courts to send, alike, offenders and children in need of care or protection to

remand homes, to approved schools or to the care of the local education authorities as a 'fit person'. Those 'committed' children, whether or not they had been found guilty of an offence, were seen as a separate class from those cared for 'voluntarily' by the poor law. They were the responsibility of the Home Office: the poor law was administered by another ministry, working through the boards of guardians, and later public assistance committees. The distinction was not between the guilty and the innocent but between those subject to a court order and those who were not. The period from 1948 to 1971, served by children's departments, saw a shift away from the idea that children committed to care for neglect or delinquency had, as a group, different needs from those in 'voluntary' care. Curtis deprecated this idea in paragraphs 461, 471 and 483:

" ... it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between the small child needing care or protection on account of his own naughtiness (e.g. because he is a truant or beyond control or even because he has been guilty of pilfering) and the child needing it on account of parental neglect. The Juvenile Court may prescribe different treatment for the two at a later date; or it may take the view that for the small 'delinquent' as well as for the child removed from a bad home, good home conditions in a new environment are the best treatment ... we see no reason why during the period of waiting ... the child should not be with other children in the reception home." (Paragraph 483)

Central government tried for twenty years after 1948 to restrict the use of remand homes and approved schools to children who had been committed to care by courts. In 1950, Miss Joan Cooper, children's officer for East Sussex, subsequently becoming chief inspector of child care, asked John Ross, assistant secretary in charge of child care and probation, "What is the purpose of remand homes?". This fuelled a controversy which lasted until the Children & Young Persons Act 1969, when approved schools and remand homes were assimilated into the local authority child care systems. The first tentative moves were daringly enacted in the Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1952 which provided

for the establishment of 'special reception centres' to which courts might remand alleged delinquents under the age of twelve. The children's officer for Cornwall ran, for years, a combined boys' hostel and reception centre to which courts were not unwilling to remand delinquent boys of any age. The Home Office sometimes wrote to the clerk to the county council saying it was unlawful, but the children's committee supported her view that the establishment was a 'boys' hostel with remand facilities'. In 1961 the Devon County Council unsuccessfully sought the approval of the House of Lords to a clause in the Special Powers Bill authorising the remand of any child or young person to its special reception centre. The clause was not agreed to and so the authority, having closed its under-used girls' remand home, was obliged to continue sending remanded girls over twelve to Bristol, the two return journeys often occasioning the consumption of time and expense for escorting officers for travelling more than 400 miles in all. However, two years later Section 24 of the Children & Young Persons Act 1963 raised the maximum age for remands to special reception centres from twelve to fifteen. The act of 1969 did away with all limitations leaving it to the court and the authority to send a child to be remanded to any 'community home'. The controversy about 'deprived and depraved' aroused strong feelings in the nineteen-fifties and is not lightly to be dismissed. The Home Office rightly exercised their powers under Sub-Section 13(6) of the 1948 act to withhold consent for a youngster to be housed indefinitely in a remand home: a practice which had become common before and during the war. But the question was posed on the false assumption that it was 'either/or' and that, whereas remand homes were custodial, for naughty young people, reception homes were caring places for unfortunate undesirables. This is fantasy. The subcultures both of remand homes and of reception homes were not remarkably distinguishable and no one should be kept in either for a day longer than necessary.

8.10 SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE OF TWELVE LARGE AUTHORITIES

TABLE 8.10
Twelve Largest Authorities' Reception Facilities
England

Grade	Performance of Authority	Number of Authorities
1	Very Good	1
2	Good	1
3	Satisfactory	2
4	Below Satisfactory	4
5	Weak	2
Ungraded	Insufficient evidence	2

Extracts from the inspectors' reports on each of the ten authorities graded above:

Grade 1 : A 'Very Good' Authority

Inspectors described model features of the reception centre in authority 106, with detailed reports from all sources and conferences leading to recommendations within two months and an intermediate home for those who could not move immediately. All area children's officers attended the case conferences and therefore knew of every child's needs. The original child care officer remained responsible, at least until the child left the centre.

Grade 2 : A 'Good' Authority

Authority 028 modelled their reception centre on the Mersham reception home report. All the field workers paid tribute to the detailed and helpful reports received from this centre.

Grade 3 : Two 'Satisfactory' Authorities

Inspectors reported that reception centre case conferences continued on standard lines in authority 029.

Inspectors made no adverse comment on the reception centre in authority 036, which was used for children committed to care when assessment was considered to be necessary and for those described as 'problem cases' and those returned from foster homes.

Grade 4 : Four 'Below Satisfactory' Authorities

Inspectors thought that the monthly meetings which had recently started at the reception centre in authority 050 resulted in a standard little above that of a 'receiving home'. Initial histories were inadequate, specialist facilities were lacking and little consideration was given to the family. Seven children in this authority's care had remained for more than a year in the reception home of a neighbouring authority awaiting vacancies in long-stay homes. The children's officer had a limited understanding of what was needed in reception facilities and insufficient staff, of mediocre quality.

The 'highly educated and youngish' assistant children's officer of authority 062 thought it unnecessary to have conferences in the reception home. Decisions on a child's future were left to the warden of the centre and the appropriate area children's officer, although the latter was not always consulted.

The children's officer and assistant children's officer of authority 067 had not recognised the advantages of a proper reception unit. A report to the children's committee said that the need for elaborate assessment was still an open question. A cottage in the grouped homes complex was used for emergency admissions and for children committed to care but had no specially experienced staff. However the warden made a good home for the children and liaised with the child care officers.

The reception centre in authority 105 had been opened but not yet organised. The intermediate homes were full, causing a backlog in the reception centre.

Grade 5 : Two 'Weak' Authorities

Authority 017 shared a reception centre with a neighbouring authority. It was permanently filled with 'difficult' children who were not moved on. No case conferences were held and no information was gathered from other agencies concerned with a family. Meanwhile newly admitted children were taken to ordinary children's homes without written reports, expert assessment or consultation with staff.

Authority 018 delayed ten years in setting up the reception centre which was due to open in the year following the inspection. It was then intended to use it primarily for observation and assessment of children already in care whose placement presented special difficulties. Newly admitted children went to any home or nursery where there was a vacancy. No case conferences were held. Children admitted for long stays were discussed by the children's officer with the child care officer and often placed far from their families. Some of these discussions were not recorded and those which were recorded were often vague as to reasons for the decision.

Ungraded : Two authorities with insufficient evidence

Authority 034 had some establishments, and parts of establishments

called 'reception centres' and these were used for children newly committed to care and, occasionally, a child received voluntarily under section 1 who presented special difficulties. The rest were taken to any establishment, statutory, voluntary or private, which had a vacancy: school age children to homes, under-fives to nurseries. Inspectors saw a family of six children split between four different places. Apparently the child care officers visited the reception centres (which the inspectors did not describe or evaluate in their reports).

Inspectors said that in authority 053, the admitting child care officer always attended the case conference in the reception centre, but formal responsibility was transferred to the child care officer attached to that centre. The child might move to a children's home and get a third child care officer and then to a foster home and get a fourth. Child care officers were not supposed to visit the children they had put into the reception centre, except to attend a case conference. The inspectors' reports did not describe or evaluate the reception centre in their reports.

8.11 CONCLUSION

To provide 'special facilities for reception' was a major recommendation of the Curtis Committee which was enacted in the Children Act. The Home Secretary could require an authority which provided any homes at all to include separate reception provision. The inspectorate tried hard to get projects established. The idea caught on with many of those authorities. It was stalled by others who felt they needed little advice from central government and by those who saw the task as a simple task of frugally bringing up poor children. After the first few years the initiative tended to pass from councillors to those children's officers who survived the initial holocaust. Not all children's officers were persuaded of the value of special reception facilities. The first incumbent at Birmingham described, in a published report, how he had abandoned the idea ⁰²⁶. Some of the small county boroughs came in for the heaviest censure from the Home Office. Two negative factors operated here. First, the smaller authorities which had no reception facilities of their own were usually persuaded to make an arrangement with a nearby authority to use theirs. This would, of course,

involve payment, usually at very much higher unit rates than the small authority was accustomed to spend on the generality of children in their own establishments. On one occasion, three children from a smallish Midlands county, through circumstances which do not affect the argument, got lodged in Devon's reception centre where, for good reason, they stayed for several weeks. The children's officer in whose care they were said that every time his case committee met the first question was, "Are we still paying Devon for the three children?" The Devon county treasurer was so impressed with the remonstrances of his opposite number in the Midlands that he recommended a lower weekly charge, on the grounds that 'the children do not need assessing'. The second factor discouraging authorities from establishing reception centres was more subtle. Enough has been said in this study so far to show that, throughout the 23 years, there was no consensus among children's officers and committees as to the nature and purpose of child caring. A children's officer entering a case conference in somebody else's reception home would feel uneasy in the sub-culture of a place backed by the combined opinions of the superintendent, staff and the managers of the host department. There was also the travelling time and expense, for child and parents, for escorts and child care officers, when a child was cared for outside the care authority's boundaries. The concept of a separate reception facility, like the basic recommendations of the Curtis Committee, was historically sound for the times in which it was first formulated and for the 23 years during which it was operated within children's departments. It was however based on ideas which have since undergone modification. These were:

- a That virtually every child on coming into care should go through a reception centre. More sophisticated intervention by social workers has shown that some of the careless receptions into care of the Curtis era need not have taken place at all.
- b That by simply looking at children newly received into residential care you may not find out a lot about them.

- c That it was acceptable as a routine to subject a child to an additional move, first from his own home to a reception centre and thence to a 'placement'.
- d That it was unacceptable to contemplate, as a routine, a further move to an intermediate home to await a placement.
- e That a child was more easily 'assessed in a reception centre than in his own home.
- f That parents and the child's relationship with them and with the rest of his family and his surroundings was of little significance.
- g That 'the ever open door', first attributed to Dr Barnardo, was of lasting value in the new age of understanding. Barnardo himself only allowed a night's shelter before putting his headles on to rigorous investigation of prolonged need.

The years after 1971 are, in general, outside the range of this study. To put the use of reception facilities into perspective it is worth observing that after 1971 there was a surge of opinion against 'observation and assessment centres'. Some officers in charge of such centres made a point of first interviewing children and their parents away from the centre, in the family home or in a police station, out of normal hours if necessary and only receiving a child under a contract which provided for continuing contact with the parents. After an interval of nearly two decades it is apparent that some of the most successful children's departments used reception centres as instruments of management. Describing the reception centre as 'the power house of the department' it was not unusual to hold case conferences at regular intervals as short as three weeks. To ensure that priority was given to the needs of recently admitted children, every child care officer who had a child in the centre was required to attend each case conference whether or not that officer believed that there was anything new to report. Of course there was always something new to report, if only that three more weeks in the child's life had gone by: a fact of vital importance at such a time of crisis. The centrality of reception centres, along with Curtis' other principal tenets, such as the separate children's departments and the

emphasis on boarding out made a vital contribution to the changes of 1948-1971. By 1971 all three of these could be seen as historical phases, necessary in their time, but ripe for review. The statutory obligation to board out a child in care unless it was, for the time being impracticable, had been repealed and the place of centres for reception, remand, observation or assessment came under rigorous review.

CHAPTER NINE

LINKS WITH FAMILIES

"Sensitive and knowledgeable work by professional social work practitioners is required to secure a practical partnership with parents which will operate in the best interests of the children."

Sir William Utting : Chief Inspector of Social Services
Foreword to 'Social Work Decisions in Child Care'
Department of Health & Social Security

9. 1 WHAT THE CURTIS COMMITTEE THOUGHT

In paragraphs 202-204 headed, 'Contact with Relatives', the committee said it was most unusual for children in the care of public assistance committees to have regular contact with relatives by visits. Most children received no letters. The people looking after the children were sympathetic but accepted this as inevitable: the children had been deserted and in most cases the parents were unworthy of guardianship. The staff had not seriously considered encouraging parents to take an interest. Those parents who did visit were received with reasonable hospitality and were not usually restricted to monthly visiting days. A few children went home for holidays. The councils' administrative officers seemed unduly influenced by the fear that undesirable parents would reclaim their children when they reached wage earning age (at that time, fourteen). Many staff recognised the children's delight in receiving letters but also feared that they might thereby be 'unsettled'. Both incoming and outgoing letters were, as a rule, read by staff. Children were generally encouraged to write letters and stationery and stamps were usually available. By way of comparison the committee recorded, in paragraphs 257-259, that some children in voluntary homes probably had rather closer contact with their parents and families. This

may have been because the criteria for admission were different. Many of the parents of children in voluntary homes had sufficient interest in their children to choose a voluntary home. In paragraph 493 (xiv) the committee recommended that every effort should be made to keep a child in touch with such relatives as he might possess, "provided of course the contact is not likely to do him harm".

9. 2 SECTION 1 OF THE CHILDREN ACT 1948

Section 1 provided that nothing in that section should authorise an authority to keep a child in their care under that section if any parent or guardian desired to take over the care. In all cases where it seemed consistent with the child's welfare they should try to secure that his care was taken over by a parent, guardian, relative or friend. Parents, for their part, were required by Section 10 to keep the authority informed of their addresses for the time being. The intention seems to have been to enable the authority to obtain contributions towards the child's maintenance. Section 10 did not apply to parents of children who had reached the age of sixteen, presumably because the parents' financial liability then ceased.

9. 3 ASSUMPTION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AND POWERS

Section 2 of the act empowered an authority in certain circumstances to pass a resolution assuming 'all the rights and powers' of a parent of a child in their care under Section 1. Many of the rights and powers of parents were enshrined in common law and there was no comprehensive schedule of them. Local authorities were, however, specifically excluded by Sub-Section 2(7) from changing a child's denominational upbringing and were not empowered to consent to a child's adoption. By Sub-Section 17(2) they might not arrange for a child

to emigrate without, if practicable, first consulting the parents. The authors of 'Clarke Hall and Morrison on Children', 4th Edition, on page 298 expressed the view that authorities acquired the power to give or withhold consent to the marriage of a young person in their care . Parents were not relieved of the obligation to contribute towards their children's maintenance. The powers to assume parents' rights and powers had been vested in local authorities under Section 52 of the Poor Law Act 1930 itself, and reenactment of powers vested in the poor law guardians. The Curtis Committee had said, in paragraph 425:

"We do not favour the assumption of parental rights by a local authority ... by mere resolution without an initial application to a court."

This passing observation was not considered sufficiently important to be carried forward into the committee's formal list of recommendations. The power was reenacted in 1948 and was used with widely differing degrees of propriety by individual local authorities. This was not to be amended until the Child Care Act of 1990.

9. 4 'FIT PERSON' ORDERS

The 1948 act obliged local authorities to accept responsibility for youngsters committed to their care as a 'fit person'. A person to whom the youngster was committed should have:

" ... the same rights and powers and be subject to the same liabilities ... as if he were his parent ... and the person so committed shall continue in his care notwithstanding any claim by a parent".

In passing a resolution the local authority assumed **all** the rights and powers of the parent, whereas a 'fit person' order conferred the **same** rights and powers. Many practitioners did not notice the different wording and even textbook writers sometimes assumed that the affect of a resolution was "the same as a 'fit person' order". A study of the words of the two statutes suggests that, under a

resolution, the parent lost most of his rights for the time being whereas, under a 'fit person' order a parent lost only the right to have the child in his care. This has practical consequences. A parent whose child was subject to a 'fit person' order might, for example, give valid consent to marriage or to a surgical operation, whereas a parent whose rights had been assumed by resolution could not.

9. 5 APPROVED SCHOOL ORDERS

Sections 57 and 62 of the 1933 act empowered courts to send youngsters to approved schools. Paragraph 12 of the Fourth Schedule to the 1933 act provided that:

" ... all rights and powers exercisable by law by a parent shall as respects any person under the care of the managers of an approved school be vested in them."

Here again it appears that the rights and powers of parents were not extinguished but that they coexisted with those of the managers, subject to other powers conferred on managers by the Fourth Schedule and by the Approved School Rules.

9. 6 HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR 160/48

This circular, issued the day after the Children Act, came into force introducing the act's main provisions and said, in paragraph 5:

"Where a home can be so improved that ... a child who has been taken away for a time can properly be restored to his parent's care the advantage of this course is unquestionable."

Provision was made in the act for the restoration to parents of children who have been for a time received into care by the local authority, whenever such a course was consistent with the welfare of the child. Inspectors' reports often neglected to comment on the degree of efforts made by the authorities to keep parents in

touch with children or to try to secure their restoration to parental care. After the Chief Inspector had published her 'Guidelines for Inspectors' there were fewer such omissions ²¹¹. When inspectors had been satisfied, on an earlier occasion, with the attention directed to any particular matter by the authority, they might not have thought it worthy of mention on a subsequent visit. The impression gained from a study of the inspectors' reports is that, a decade after the 1948 act, more and more people were beginning to appreciate the immense significance of parents and surrogate parents in the thoughts and feelings of children who were separated from them.

9. 7 THE TRADITION BEFORE 1948

The new departments had inherited the broad assumptions of the education and public assistance committees, that the parents of children in care had displayed their incompetence and that those of children under the poor law had displayed their incapacity or unwillingness to provide proper care. The job of the authority was to provide the child with a fresh start. As one distinguished practitioner said in 1958, "Our job is to take a plant out of sour soil and replace it in wholesome soil" ^k.

9. 8 MAINTAINING PARENTAL CONTACTS START BEFORE ADMISSION

Links between child and parents is not something to be begun after the child comes into care. It should have pervaded the whole of the child care work from the first time when the family was brought to the attention of the department. The parents' and child's first impressions of the child care service will colour the attitude which each adopts towards the authority and its workers. It begins with the first phone call or visit made by a parent or with the first intervention of the authority's officers in the family's affairs. In entering, or responding

to, a family the social workers are interfering in a delicate structure which began to be built before the child was born. It may display serious design faults or subsequent damage but it remains the cradle of the child's existence so far; the only family he has known, which has provided all the experiences of a short life time. The subject matter of this chapter is a simple extension in the time of the process preceding admission to care.

9. 9 THE RESCUE MOTIVE

In 1948 the rescue motive tended to govern the provision of long-term substitute care. Unless the parents were dead or physically incapacitated, it was assumed that they had failed in the trusteeship of their children. The local authority's task was thought to be to find new and better substitutes. The continued existence of interested parents might sometimes be seen as an irksome liability, tending to unsettle the children, to interfere with the department's plans and to attract hostility from houseparents and foster parents. In extreme circumstances a social worker would make off with the children from, say, an eviction or from a juvenile court, with hardly a word to the parents except to warn them of their duty to keep the authority informed of their whereabouts so that financial contributions could be claimed from them. Under pressure from parents and from public opinion it was rare for access to be altogether denied but the almost universal approach to the issue was to 'let sleeping dogs lie'.

9.10 EXAMPLE FROM THE SINGLE CASE STUDY

Miss Moss, in the single case study, was exceptional for her time in that she urged Mrs Curtis to visit John and meticulously informed her of the frequent changes of address which her sons experienced. But Miss Moss unsympathetically brushed off a pathetic plea from John's father to have the boy placed near him

and only one or twice exercised the authority conferred by the committee chair to pay monthly for Mrs Curtis to visit Tom at Borrowdale School. Could there be any clearer example of the 'sterile institutional correctitude' which the Curtis Committee especially warned against in their paragraph 446. Child care officers could have been made aware of the conflict aroused in parents by the implications of having their child looked after by someone else. As early as 1946, Ruth Thomas, in her published evidence to the Curtis Committee, referred to the parent who never responded to the monthly letter sent to parents by the matron of a residential nursery for evacuated children ³⁸⁵:

"Even when no reply has been received for more than a year, the absence of the accustomed letter sometimes brings the first reply - a protest at the omission - clearly showing that the letter had at least kept alive the parents' interest, and that they now missed them."

The retention and encouragement of links with parents was another facet of a department's attention to the whole process of admission to care. Since the justification for admission to care was so often accepted without thorough investigation it would have been surprising if much effort had been put into keeping alive the family links which might have led to restoration.

9.11 DIFFERENTIATING PARENTAL LINKS FROM FRATERNAL LINKS

In a sense the subject of this chapter, on maintaining a child's links with his parents, and that of the next chapter, on links with brothers and sisters, represent two facets of the same operation: that is preserving, so far as possible, a child's links with his family and, through them and with them, with the whole of his experience of life before admission to care. The child carers of 1948 to 1971 understandably saw these subjects as two separate issues. First, the parental role is clearly differentiated from the fraternal one, although an older brother or sister may sometimes, to a limited extent, substitute for a

parent. Secondly, in the law of domestic relations and of child care, the parents have rights and duties more powerful and more onerous than a brother or sister. Thirdly, except in the rare instance when a mother under the age of 18 is in care at the same time as her child, an authority's relationship with the parent is in many respects very different from its relationship with the child. Even in this special instance the authority's relationship with the mother differs substantially from its relationship with the baby. Fourthly, an authority's management of relationships with parents of children in care presents very different problems from its management of a family of brothers and sisters who are in care. The child care officers of course recognised parents as free agents who acknowledged varying amounts of responsibility for their children. On the other hand they saw brothers and sisters in care as persons who were, at least nominally, entitled to equal treatment from the authority, having regard to age and other circumstances. They paid lip service at any rate to the principle of keeping brothers and sisters at least in touch, even if they could not live in the same building.

9.12 STARTING AT THE BEGINNING

It has already been observed, in chapter 8 on facilities for the reception of children, that the maintenance and control of relationships between children in care and their parents will be in the forefront of the social worker's mind from the time when the family first comes to the department's notice. It is not something to be tacked onto a case load for attention when an officer has an hour or two to spare. Unfortunately this latter approach was the best that most departments could do after taking over responsibility in 1948. In chapter 7, concerning admissions to care, it was shown that committees, children's officers and child care officers displayed a wide diversity of attitude towards parents.

A strong judgmental element was hardly avoidable when a child came into care by judicial order. In effect the court only made an order if it were convinced, among other things, that the parent was unfit or incapable of providing care or protection. The means by which a child comes into 'voluntary' care, under Section 1 of the 1948 act, also rested on a definition of parental incapacity. The parent had either died, or had lost or abandoned the child or was 'prevented' by some circumstance from providing a proper upbringing. Less than one child in a hundred is in public care at any one time. The implication of such deviance from the circumstances of the other 99 must sometimes be present in the mind of parent, child, social worker and the public alike, although or course substantially more than one percent of the child population has been in care at some time in childhood. As if the primitive attitudes thus aroused were not sufficiently incapacitating, they are reinforced by the presumed virtue of those who arrange or undertake the care of other people's children: foster parents, houseparents, social workers, councillors and of course, the rate and tax payers. Parents were on a sticky wicket in 1948. Conditions generally improved in the years under review, though only a few authorities performed 'well' or 'very well' in partnership with parents, and many authorities did badly to the end, some because of entrenched punitive attitudes but more often through lack of time and interest to devote to parental links.

9.13 CORRESPONDENCE WITH PARENTS

Curtis found that it was generally the practice in public assistance homes to open all the children's letters before passing them on and also to look at outgoing letters. Children could usually get postage stamps if they wanted to write. Turning to approved schools, Curtis noticed that the system of classification meant that many children were sent to schools situated inconveniently for

travelling, but much depended on staff attitudes. Children in one remote country approved school received more visits than those in more easily accessible schools (paragraph 299). It is significant that children who were sent compulsorily to approved schools, often against their own and their parents' wishes, tended to experience more enlightened regimes, particularly with regard to parental links, than did children in public assistance homes. In making comparisons, account must be taken of the older average age of young people in approved schools and that their parents had not usually asked for their admission to the schools, whereas the children in homes were usually there at their parents' request. It seemed that as a consequence of what was said by the Curtis Committee and other organs of opinion, councillors of all parties were ready for minor changes in institutional regimes. By 1949 the Croydon children's committee, prompted by a radical vice-chair, wanted to instruct houseparents that they were not to monitor incoming or outgoing letters of children of any age. Eventually the committee granted some discretion for houseparents to see some children's outgoing letters on the grounds that they might, for example, be responding to catch-penny advertisements.

9.14 THE HOME OFFICE VIEW

Although the Curtis Committee mentioned, in three places, the arrangements for maintaining children's contacts with their families, they included nothing specific among their 62 recommendations. It was left to the inspectorate and other civil servants to emphasise the seriousness of removal from home. Circular 160 of 8 July 1948, already mentioned said, in paragraph 5:

"The importance must also be kept in mind of doing all that is possible to save children from suffering misfortune. Where a home can be so improved that it is unnecessary to remove a child from his parent or that a child who has been taken away for a time can properly be restored to his parents' care, the advantage of this course is unquestionable."

The circular went on to say, in paragraph 20, that the purpose of Section 10 of the act was:

" ... to enable contact to be maintained between parent and child , and to facilitate arrangements for restoring a child to his own home as soon as circumstances permit."

If that was the primary purpose of those who drafted the bill it is difficult to understand why this parental obligation ceased at the child's sixteenth birthday. One suspects that the draftsman had in mind that the parents' common law obligation towards his child ceased at the sixteenth birthday and that the parent could then no longer be required to contribute towards the child's maintenance. The Association of Children's Officers belatedly protested at this limitation and it was subsequently put right by statute.

9.15 ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTS

Just as there was a confusing variety of attitudes shown by children's officers towards the reception of children into care, so there were equally confused sets of opinions about maintaining contact with parents and about the restoration of children to parental care. The rescue motive, the punitive motive, the economic motive together with other motives impelled hardly less forcefully the thoughts and actions of social workers in their varying approaches towards restoration (sometimes clumsily called 'rehabilitation'). There are clear statements enshrined in Section 1 of the 1948 act:

"Nothing in this section shall authorise a local authority to keep a child in their care under this section if a parent or guardian desires to take over the care of the child ... (the authority) ... shall endeavour to secure that the care of the child is taken over either by a parent or guardian of his or by a relative or friend of his, provided that this appears consistent with the welfare of the child."

The limits of the authority's powers, and the extent of its duty, could not be more clearly stated. Extremely rarely was a child's care taken over by a

'friend' who was not a relative. In one instance this occurred to an orphaned boy of 13 who had formed a warm relationship with a childless married couple through an 'uncles and aunts' scheme for befriending children in homes. In effect it was an informal 'adoption', neither generation wanting to go through adoption formalities. After the transfer no more was heard from them again although they lived close to the children's department's office. That other aspect of Section 1, " ... to secure that the care of the child is taken over ... ", was, of course, also limited by the proviso that such taking over must be consistent with the child's welfare. Not every child care worker grasped the distinction (expressed now in unstatutory language) between "you can't keep a child in care if his parent wants him back" and, "you must try to get his parent to take him back, but only if that is in the child's interests". The confusion is similar to that of the police officers who thought that an authority could 'take' a child into care against the wishes of a parent, "if it appeared necessary in the interests of the welfare of the child". This view is faced sharply in an interchange between the inspector and the children's officer for authority 143 in paragraph 9.20 below.

9.16 THE BOGEY OF THE REAPPEARING PARENT

Paragraph 203 of the Curtis Report said:

"Comments were more often made to us by administrative officers about the difficulties that arose when undesirable parents became interested in children as soon as they reached wage earning age, than about the deprivation suffered by the children from the lack of family contact. This danger may unduly influence their attitude from a genuine motive of protecting the child's interests."

After 1948, the hundreds of children in care leaving school did not bring to notice more than a handful of parents who reclaimed their children in circumstances detrimental to them so as to supplement the family income. It is typical of the times that Curtis did not question of concept of 'undesirable' parents. Thieves, perhaps, or prostitutes? On the other hand there was little

awareness in those days of the prevalence of sexual abuse within the family, affecting boys as well as girls of all ages. Many children were in care under the public assistance committees because their parent had been widowed or because of bad housing or of poverty: putting children into homes was an alternative to 'out relief'. Children had often been committed to the care of education authorities for not going to school, for being 'beyond control' or for other delinquencies. The structure of child care before 1948 was based on the assumption that the authorities provide a 'desirable' milieu for children whose parents had created an 'undesirable' one. Subsequent experience taught the bitter lesson that public care was not generally all that 'desirable' in its consequences either. On the whole, child care workers grew to welcome opportunities for a child to go home, at fourteen or any other age. Certainly there were some children who, of their own volition, went home after leaving school and most children were curious and excited if a long-lost parent turned up. In the twenty-three years after 1948 there was little juvenile unemployment. National Service, lodgings or residential work was available for those willing to conform. The few young men and women who did not conform were unlikely to be an economic asset to parents who asked to have them back.

9.17 PARENTS OF 'RESIDUAL EVACUEES'

The parents of the inelegantly named 'residual evacuees' who had not reclaimed them after the war formed a special group. The children's initial responses to their parents' reappearance, years after the war, fell into three groups: those who were overjoyed to be in touch with origins again; those who felt firmly ensconced in their foster families and 'didn't want to know'; and the middle group who were undecided. In the end, young people from each of these three groups tended to agree to some sort of reunion, either a trip to town to have

a look at their barely remembered former homes, or a visit from one or both parents, perhaps bringing new brothers and sisters, to the foster parents' home in the country. A few young people did go back to their families but the more usual outcome was that they stayed on in the countryside, curiosity satisfied, and with assurances all round of the intention to keep in touch in future. Few families gained a wage earner in this way: indeed the timing of the parents' reappearances followed no pattern. They could turn up while the child had some time yet to go at school or a long time after the child would have been likely to have left school. The reappearances seemed to relate more to marital or housing circumstances than to economic ones. Of course, by the early 1950s when these incidents occurred, the evacuees would have reached their teens and would have been away from their parents for at least five years, possibly ten or more.

9.18 EXAMPLES OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTS

Here is an example of the practice of a 'very good' authority. In 1956 inspectors reported on Authority 119, with about 200 children in care:

"The department makes a special point of keeping children in care in contact with their parents. It is thought that this is right in itself, as well as being calculated to help in the process of eventually restoring the child to the family, and the child care officers visit the parents of children in care regularly to discuss their circumstances and repair the link. If parents and children wish, all children in the homes, and some boarded-out, return to their relatives for the day every weekend. Very occasionally a father is not allowed to visit his daughter but normally children and parents are allowed, indeed encouraged, to visit regularly. The children's officer has found resistance to this on the part of both parents and foster parents where (before 1949) visits had not been allowed for years but found that parents would visit their children regularly if they were started on this course. As a result of the continuing contact between child and family, the regard for the family situation and a system whereby one child care officer is responsible for every member of the family in care and visits the parents as well, the number of discharges has been substantially greater than the number of admissions for the last three years ... the authority often itself applies for the discharge of a 'fit person' order. This is perhaps an unusual procedure but the children's officer correctly pointed out that the Act gives authority for 'any person' to do so."

Does not this example, however, raise the question whether some of the children who went home for the day every weekend needed to remain in care at all? It is sad that no other reports were found in the records of the remaining 125 authorities to match this description of the attention to parents devoted by Authority 119. The inspectors often made passing remarks of sufficient clarity to justify the allocation of a grade, but the basis for the inspectors' judgement went unrecorded. A brief flash of information about the positive attitude towards parents of Authority 089 (graded 2 - 'good'), with 100 to 200 children in care, came from an inspector's report in 1959:

"The children's officer sent a tape recording of a child's voice to the child's mother in prison. The chair of the children's committee protested publicly when the prison governors initially refused to let the prisoner have it."

It is often only on the basis of chance remarks on single incidents like this that assessments can be made in most instances of authorities' attitudes to parents. A middle-of-the-road example is Authority 052 (graded 3 - 'satisfactory'), inspected in 1957 with 100 to 200 children in care:

"Of 69 children boarded-out for more than a year, 44 had had no contact with parents who had died, disappeared or 'been absorbed into another family or way of living in which there is no room for the child'. Visits to relatives 'involved much travelling and trouble for child care officers'. Child care officers talked to boarded-out children about their families as a matter of course and sought opportunities to explain the circumstances and helped children to understand. Foster parents were given information and sometimes they passed this on to the child as and when it seemed best."

In most authorities where the inspectors were dissatisfied with the maintenance of relationships between parents and children in care, it seemed not to be because of reluctance to do so but because of lack of time. That is to say that the child care officer's other tasks, such as investigating applications for reception into care and visiting boarded-out children, were understandably given priority. In those many authorities where there were insufficient field staff to do all the tasks expected of child care officers, something was bound to be

neglected. Obviously those tasks which had, by virtue of necessity or of statutory regulation, to be done today would be done. Tasks perceived as less immediate would be put off till tomorrow. There was sometimes, of course, pressure from foster parents to minimise children's relations with their parents, an attitude which died out only slowly since it was actually endorsed by some of the older child care officers. In 1956 the inspectors reported on Authority 083, with 400 to 500 children in care:

"It is said to be the policy of the department to make contact between members of families. There seems to be a very considerable weakness in this matter. The organisation of the work does not lead the child care officers to feel responsibility for any particular family but only for those members whom they happen to be supervising. In several cases child care officers had only very scanty and inaccurate knowledge about the parents and families of the children they interviewed and the case papers do not give clear information ... what is required ... is an alteration of the system to make it a positive obligation of a special officer to consider ... the family as a whole."

That was an example of the many authorities which theoretically acknowledged the need to keep children in touch with their parents but failed to provide either the structure or the staff which would ensure that the need was met. Another kind of authority meant well but had failed to prepare foster parents for the continuing interest between child and parent. The children's officer and staff of Authority 070, with 200 to 300 children in care in 1958, were required to treat seriously and sympathetically the importance of maintaining family ties:

"Wherever possible foster children were allowed to see their natural parents as often as possible. But there were great difficulties in persuading foster parents that such contacts were in the interests of the foster children. Some had categorically refused to allow the children to meet their relatives because it would upset the children and divide loyalties."

In 1959 the children's officer for Authority 074, with 200 to 300 children in care, was definitely reluctant to accustom foster parents to understand and accept natural parents. Other children's officers may have meant well but could not contain their resentment. In 1956 the inspectors reported on Authority 057, with fewer than 100 children in care:

"In some cases considerable trouble was taken with parents. But the subject is one on which the children's officer is liable to become rather angry. The children's officer argues that contact should not be maintained at all costs and can be positively harmful. Some of the parents aroused feelings of resentment and dislike in the children's officer."

Only rarely did inspectors report that pressure from other agencies had affected an authority's decisions concerning children's relationships with parents. In 1956, the children's officer for Authority 030, with 400 to 500 children in care, thought that a family of children who had been committed to care by the court might 'go home on trial'. Both parents had been charged with neglect but the case against the father had been dismissed. The mother was convicted and put on probation. The children's officer knew that the NSPCC inspector and the probation officer were opposed to rehabilitation and so the children stayed in group residential care.

9.19 EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTS

Some authorities simply had no policy about parental contacts. Thus Authority 063, with 100 to 200 children in care had, in 1957, no plans to contact parents except those who fell into arrears with their financial contributions. And in 1958, Authority 116, with 400 to 500 children in care, was reported as promoting little contact with natural parents. There was no drill whereby a check could be made on parents' changing circumstances which might have enabled the restoration of children to their care:

"This results in a high proportion of children in care and seemed to contribute to a general clogging of the works."

There was no evidence that a child in care was really thought about in the context of his family:

"It is simply regarded as something from which (the child) has been removed. Thought about this has found no place in the department for the last ten years."

Some esoteric reasons were put forward for restricting parental contact. In 1957 the Secretary of State wrote to the chief executive of Authority 117, with 200 to 300 children in care, making four points, the first of which was the lack of contact between children and parents. He asked the authority to reconsider the rule that children in the cottage homes were not allowed to visit their own homes. (This was a compact area with good public transport.) In a subsequent meeting, home office officials were told that:

" ... the councillors do not like the children visiting their own homes because it upsets them and also because it is unfair to other children who could not go home."

Another kind of authority were those few where the children's officer or the committee held exceptional views, contrary to the received wisdom. The children's officer for Authority 016, with 300 to 400 children in care, told inspectors in 1955 that s/he:

" ... restricted parental contact where children are in conditions of unhappiness as a result of parents' wilful acts."

The inspector wrote:

" ... if this is not punishing the parents, what is?"

The same children's officer thought that parents should not visit long stay foster homes since, " ... it cuts across the homeliness". Turning now to the dark side, inspectors recorded many horror stories of which a representative selection is given below. The children's officer for Authority 068, with 100 to 200 children in care, was reported in 1968:

" ... to hold dogmatic views about contact between children and undesirable parents. Seven brothers and sisters occupied the whole of a 'family group home'. Their mother was cohabiting with a man by whom she has had more children. The mother was 'no use to the children' and s/he did not propose to trace her. S/he thought the law should be altered ' ... to uphold the rights of the children rather than of their parents'. S/he did not want children or foster parents to be upset. The chair of the committee was reported to have strange views on discouraging contact with 'criminal and inept parents who shirk their responsibilities'."

In 1956 inspectors found that only three families, of all those in group residential care of Authority 112, with 200 to 300 children in care, were being regularly visited by their parents although the authority's area was compact. Two years later they recorded, "practically no work is done with parents". In 1957 inspectors reported that in Authority 127, with 100 to 200 children in care, visiting from parents who were judged to be 'undesirable' was discouraged. Parents were sometimes not told that their child had been boarded-out " ... as this frequently encourages them to remove them from care". One couple had twice tried to visit their child in the residential nursery where they believed him to be. They were told to come on a different (specified) day and that permission would not be granted for any other date. This child was placed in three successive foster homes without the parents' being told that he had left the nursery. It was recorded in 1955 that a former children's officer of Authority 031, with 100 to 200 children in care, had formally "refused the application" of parents of a child in care under Section 1 to have their child restored to them, although there had been no parental rights resolutions in force. In Authority 066, with 100 to 200 children in care, the children's officer wrote, in 1965, to a mother who was living some 200 miles away and was said to be deaf and dumb:

"I think you have to accept that X (the daughter, aged 16 and living in a family group home) is no longer part of your family and that in fact she belongs to another family. I think the best way you could serve X is not to intrude into her life."

The mother's letter to her daughter was withheld from the child.

9.20 A VERY SPECIAL POINT OF VIEW

In 1965, the children's officer for Authority 143, with 600 to 700 children in care, made his/her view of the law and of policy towards parental rights clear to the inspector. S/he would not allow a child to be discharged from care if

s/he was of the opinion that the department could provide for the child more satisfactorily than his parents. S/he quoted Sub-Section 1(1)[b] of the 1948 act claiming that s/he " ... can retain a child in care if his parents are prevented from providing for his proper accommodation, maintenance and upbringing". This obvious misinterpretation of the law constituted a profound threat to parental rights. The inspectors reported it to the Home Office, commenting that this was exceeding statutory powers. A very senior member of the inspectorate wrote on the file, " ... this is altogether too personal an approach to public care". This mild response from the Home Office did little to modify the children's officer's practice. There is no record of any written representations to the authority challenging the children's officer's view. Two years later, in 1967, inspectors went back to the authority intending to pay special attention to practice concerning links with parents. These are some of the things they noted. A girl aged 16 had her fortnightly visits to her parents stopped as punishment for losing her job. The children's officer wrote to the parents saying that holidays at home were 'an earned privilege'. At a review of a boarded-out child, aged 5, it was recorded that the child had nightmares about what he would do if his foster mother died. The child care officer had not implemented a plan to visit the child's mother. The mother of a five year old child had gone abroad to marry. No contact had been made with the grandparents. Another mother of a four year old child had gone abroad to marry. The maternal grandmother and the mother's sister had visited the residential nursery but had been discouraged by the matron "who considers they are complete strangers to the child". Although the probation officer said that the maternal grandparents had ample warmth and affection for their three wayward daughters and their three well-behaved sons, the review report said "family contacts are almost nil" and did not mention the grandmother, whose request to have the child for the Christmas holiday was

refused. The child had spent her whole life in the nursery. The inspectors continued:

"From reading reports, statements and reviews, we gained a strong impression that the department is getting itself into the position of judging what is best for the child in relation to her family ... there is evidence of lack of thorough review and of oversight by senior staff, of failure to remind child care officers when they do not pursue family contacts and of failure to record details of relatives outside the immediate family circle. A random sample of 23 children aged 12 or over showed eight were receiving positive work to maintain family contacts. Ten showed efforts which could have been better and five lacked evidence of satisfactory movement towards restoration."

Authorities which inspectors criticised for neglecting parental links were usually those which were poorly staffed and displayed generally low levels of competence and understanding. It is the more surprising that Authority 143 was prominent in the forefront of new ideas in child care. It had one of the highest levels of qualified staff in the country and a high reputation generally.

**TABLE 9.20 Performance of Authorities in Partnership with Parents
England : Last Inspection before 1965**

1 = Very Good 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Below Satisfactory 5 = Weak
0 = Insufficient Evidence

Grade	Number of Authorities in this Group	Number of Children in this Group	Percentage of Children in this Group
Largest Authorities			
1	0	-----	0.0
2	2	2,854	9.0
3	10	24,243	76.2
4	3	2,889	9.1
5	0	-----	0.0
0	1	1,827	5.8
Total	16	31,813	100.00
Medium Authorities			
1	1	788	3.4
2	9	5,348	22.9
3	20	9,207	39.4
4	14	6,333	27.1
5	2	956	4.1
0	3	740	3.2
Total	49	23,372	100.1
Smallest Authorities			
1	1	38	0.5
2	18	2,299	26.5
3	22	3,113	35.8
4	16	2,050	23.6
5	3	420	4.8
0	5	755	8.7
Total	65	8,675	99.9
All Authorities			
1	2	826	1.3
2	29	10,501	16.4
3	52	36,563	57.2
4	8	11,272	17.6
5	5	1,376	2.2
0	9	3,322	5.2
Total	105	63,860	99.9

9.21 CONCLUSION

It may be thought that the inspectors' sorry tale of misery needlessly and sometimes punitively inflicted on children and parents, needs no further comment.

The following quotation from Olive Stevenson should more than suffice ³⁷⁹:

"The issue is seen more in terms of development in a child of a good self image and sound sense of identity. There are two elements in this; first that the child shall know who his parents were; secondly that his perception of them, coloured as it is by the adults who care for him, shall not be such as to make him feel he comes of 'bad stock'."

C H A P T E R T E N

LINKS WITH BROTHERS AND SISTERS

"Some of us have a depressing recollection of two small girls who had entered the home some half an hour or more before, sitting sadly side by side with their hats and coats still unremoved. They looked the very picture of desolation, yet so far one comfort remained - they were together. In too many Homes they would not be together long."

The Curtis Report
Paragraph 186

10. 1 FRATERNITY : A UNIVERSAL CONCEPT

The concept of fraternity seems to be accepted by most, if not all, of the human race. Starting with the idea of a bond between the issue of one man and one woman it diversifies to bonds of sentiment which may be of no less significance to a child's welfare than a formal family relationship. Fraternity includes sorority and brotherhood includes sisterhood, unless the context excludes this assumption. The old English word 'sibling' is eschewed, useful though it is, because after its absence from common parlance it has returned as sociological jargon.

10. 2 DIVERSITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

It is hard to disassociate fraternal relationships from relationships with parents since it is children's parents who beget them. Fraternity comes in many ways: the whole blood or the half blood; inside or outside marriage or through a sequence of two or more relationships. Occasionally brothers and sisters have died or disappeared before the birth of others. It is common for children in care to have new brothers and sisters of whom they know little. Then there

is step-fraternity in which, as in adoptive and foster relationships, there is no known common ancestry and incest, where there is more than one common strand of inheritance. Some children have, like Pip in 'Great Expectations', a grown-up brother or sister acting as parent. The value of fraternal links is illustrated in the study of the Curtis family when social workers' failure to recognise the significance of the grown-up uncle or half-brother frustrated the boys' chances of getting more fraternal support from him. That study shows missed opportunities for using the warmth of fraternity and illustrates how social workers could have responded to those who show feelings towards a brother or sister and their need to keep in touch.

10. 3 THE ADMINISTRATIVE STEREOTYPE

As the Curtis family case history shows, the concept of 'keeping brothers and sisters together' had a narrower connotation. The tendency was to think only of those who were in care, a fragment of a family singled out for administrative purposes. Attention needs to be paid to the whole of a child's relationships when he is separated by admission to public care. A child may show that he is missing the companionship of a playmate, or the understanding of a school dinner lady as he is mourning the loss of more formal relationships.

10. 4 THE PRE-CURTIS INHERITANCE

Of course, the significance of family ties was not discovered by Curtis. Before 1948 the statutory and voluntary organisations and evacuation officials had done their best to keep brothers and sisters together. When the evacuation trains decanted children onto the wayside stations it was necessary to remind billeting officers of this principle. The principle which was foremost in the minds of most parents. Their last words to older children were "... mind they put you

in the same place as your little brother and sister". An argument for large homes was that they facilitated the upbringing of brothers and sisters. This could be fantasy. In some purpose-built homes the big boys lived in one end and the girls at the other ¹. They were not supposed to speak to each other on the way to school. Brothers and sisters could meet under supervision on Sunday afternoons.

10.5 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST MIXING

Many factors made it difficult to keep brothers and sister together.

1 Segregation by Age

It is very difficult for any agency to reproduce the flexibility and diversity of a family. Even in ordinary households stresses can reach breaking point when faced with the demands of pubertal youngsters, boisterous or handicapped children of primary school age, demanding toddlers and yelling babies. Many gallant attempts have been made to provide substitute care under one roof for a diverse group of brothers and sisters. Some have been successful, notably grandparents and uncles and aunts who succeed to the responsibilities of deceased parents, and also specially recruited foster parents, or specially dedicated house parents such as those employed by the Children's Family Trust ^m. These are heroic exceptions to the general pattern of substitute care. The biological family is unique. It is hopeless to try manufacturing a copy except possibly when the children's ages and all the circumstances make the lifelong commitment of a married couple feasible. By and large, the child care agencies went in for some degree of segregation by age into separate regimes supposedly tailored to the needs and demands of the children and the talents and capacities of the staff. What fourteen-year-old boy wants to live in a house which is also a residential nursery? The general pattern of residential group care before 1948 was, therefore, to provide homes for children within the age limit for compulsory schooling (in 1948 from the fifth to the fourteenth birthday). The residential nurseries (in 1948 sometimes workhouse buildings) tended to be separate entities with a lore of their own. Their staff were called nurses, usually headed by a state registered nurse called 'Matron', with a flourishing culture and a separate training scheme attracting hundreds of later school-leavers as recruits. The system had been boosted by wartime policies which encouraged mothers to work and agencies to provide nurseries. Some had the additional cachet of being provided and managed by health committees under the supervision of medical officers and nurses, thus escaping the poor law stigma. Another feature was that they could apply for recognition from the examination board as places where nursery nurse students could be trained. Young people in care who

had reached their fourteenth birthday were not expected to stay in group residential care. The girls went 'into service' as servants in private households, apart from a few attending grammar schools or other education or training. These few were unlikely to have serious behaviour difficulties and were fairly easily fixed up in foster homes or lodgings. Boys, too, tended to leave at fourteen for various kinds of residential work or training, such as farming or the merchant navy. There were a few hostels for older teenagers in employment or training run by voluntary bodies such as the Young Men's Christian Association. The repository for young people aged fourteen to seventeen, who were unacceptable in any of these facilities, were the approved schools. The senior and intermediate schools together were caring for 1,300 boys and 200 girls in 1948.

2 Segregation by Gender

Nurseries provided for boys and girls together. In homes for children of school age the risk of brothers and sisters being separated increased as they got older. If they had been together in a nursery they faced the risk of separation on reaching the age of five. Nursery staff might fight hard to keep a five-year-old who was attached to a younger brother or sister, or even to another, unrelated, special friend, but in the stirring cauldron of little children constantly spilling in and out of the care system, there was little hope of persuading 'the office' to leave a child who had reached the age of five in a 'bed' which would constantly be in demand for newly received children. A few prophets, like Miss Ball of Northumberland, were crying out that there was no need for residential nurseries anyway⁶¹⁴. One of the triumphs of child care between 1948 and 1971 was the steady diminution of residential group care for under-fives, with its virtually inevitable separation of brothers and sisters reaching the age of five. In November 1952 there were, in England and Wales, over 5,000 resident in local authority nurseries and an unidentified number parked in charitable and privately managed places⁶¹⁷. By April 1971 the number in local authority nurseries had been halved to 2,500 although the number of children under five in care had been increased by ten percent, from over 21,000 to over 23,000. For children of primary school age and beyond, chance would have determined whether or not provision was made in homes segregated by sex or in mixed groups. In the 1940s mixed groups were gaining ground, stimulated by the example of hostels for evacuees and for children described as 'maladjusted'. Many agencies still considered that there were advantages in single sex homes. At first sight they seemed economical because the odd place in a dormitory need never be unoccupied because the child needing it was of the wrong sex. To suppose that this was economical was fallacy. The same problem arose more often, not less often, when whole buildings were devoted exclusively to children of one sex. Homes for girls could be staffed exclusively by women whereas it was thought preferable to have at least one man in a home caring for boys of school age. It was usual for boys to move from mixed homes from the age of eleven upwards to segregated homes for boys up to school leaving age. This helped to protect the girls and the younger children from bullying and sexual impropriety. After

leaving school all provision, both in approved schools and in hostels, was in single-sex institutions. Thus the preference for single-sex institutions became more marked on moving up through the age groups until the climax at fourteen years at which point segregation became virtually universal. An example of the kind of thinking on this topic was recorded in the minutes of the committee for a council children's home in the West Country in 1946. Under wartime staffing difficulties a woman inmate from the workhouse had been installed as a resident domestic in the boys' home. The house committee, with some justification, was concerned that the woman might be a bad influence on the boys. They did not want to send her back to the workhouse so they solemnly resolved to instruct the staff that the home was to be used exclusively for girls in the future

161

3 Incidence of Admission to Care

It was not unusual for brothers and sisters to come into care at different times. The question of placing a newly-admitted child with a brother or sister would be unlikely to be the first consideration determining his first placement. Indeed, such was the quality of social work under the poor law that the department might never tumble to the fact that it had admitted to care the brother or sister of a child already in care. Even where a department was anxious to unite children it would turn out that there was no vacancy available for the newly admitted child to join his brother or sister.

4 Categorisation

Children came into care in categories. First, the legal channels into care included admission under the poor law, committal to a 'fit person' and committal to an approved school. The two latter were respectively the responsibilities of the education authority and of approved school managers. The former was the responsibility of the public assistance committee. There was little scope or inclination for uniting a child in one category with a brother or sister in another category. Even if the legal channel into care were the same for two or more children they might also be categorised according to some special need. For example, one brother might be attending an ordinary school and another might be ascertained as being educationally subnormal and sent automatically to a residential special school, which was why the two brothers in the Curtis Family in the single case study were separated.

5 Segregation by individual preferences.

Even where the formal structure did not prevent the admission of a child to a particular home to be with brothers or sisters, the individual preferences of people in charge of homes and of superintendents of groups of homes would sometimes result in brothers and sisters being parted. Thus a house parent might have taken a fancy to a particular child who had been in care before and ask to have him back. The converse might hold when a particular

child was unwelcome. Although the use of residential nurseries was halved, their continued use even for short stay children meant that families were separated if some were under five and others had reached school age. Some authorities averted this by ensuring that their reception homes would take short-stay families of all ages. Few, however, were equipped to look after very young babies who then, necessarily, went to separate nurseries or to a foster mother.

6 Fostering

Large families, more often than not, were dispersed into more than one foster home, both for long term care and for short stays. In applying the general principle of keeping brothers and sisters together the child care workers sought to strike a balance between the children's current needs and their long term interests. Although it was often difficult to forecast how long children were going to be needing care, there were some circumstances in which a fair estimate could be made. For example, when the immediate cause of reception into care was a mother's entering hospital for confinement or for a simple operation, it was reasonable to assume that the children would soon be going home. This is the kind of situation covered by the statistical category of children likely to return home within six months, the classical 'short stay'. As a general rule it seemed preferable for all brothers and sisters who were not going to be away from home for long to be cared for under one roof, even if it meant institutional care. They might then give each other assurance and support. Visits from friends and relatives would be easier, as would be counselling of children and parents. However, many authorities lacked the facilities to ensure this and the children might be distributed between an array of institutions wherever vacancies occurred. The best child care officers did not apply rules of thumb even for short stays. Tensions in the family resulting in bad relationships between brothers and sisters might be relieved by a few weeks apart. The same relief is experienced in some ordinary families. In such instances it was important to maintain the links so that each child knew where the parents and the other children were and knew that the separation was only temporary. This emphasised the importance of the key worker who had been involved in the original reception into care who knew each child and could take news to their parents and family. Conversely it seemed better to place children who were likely to stay in care for a long time in foster homes, even if this involved splitting families over two or more homes. This was based on the hope that if the children had to stay in care until adulthood, they might have someone to belong to permanently, albeit at the price of separation from brothers and sisters. A large family would rarely be split into singletons but would be placed in twos and threes. Just two children would probably not be separated unless the children themselves found it acceptable. There was some talk of 'neighbourhood boarding-out' which meant placing brothers and sisters in different households in the same close neighbourhood where they might go to the same school and visit each other's foster homes. Experience showed that the best chances of success with neighbourhood boarding-out depended on

the foster parents' being on friendly terms with each other before the children were placed. An established child care officer would often be recommended by an existing foster mother to approach friends in the neighbourhood who might be interested, thus building up a neighbourly circle of foster homes who would be likely to keep brothers and sisters boarded-out with them in touch with each other. Some authorities paid retaining fees to short stay foster parents who held themselves in readiness to take whole families at short notice.

7 Family Aides

After 1963 it was lawful to employ 'family aides' or 'homemakers' or residential home helps to look after whole families in their own homes.

10. 6 THREE SIMPLE CATEGORIES

A distinction had to be drawn between families where there was hope of restoration and those where restoration was so remote that it had to be discounted. Children could be regarded as short stay, medium stay or long stay, the last named being those whose chances of returning to their families were negligible. The last group needed a substitute family as early as possible. Far sighted authorities sought foster homes for these, even at the expense of splitting families between two or more foster homes it being understood from the outset that the department was committed to keeping the children in touch with each other.

10. 7 CONTRASTING EXAMPLES OF SEPARATION AND PROPINQUITY

In paragraph 7.24 above a woman in her forties described some of her feelings about experiencing a short stay in a children's home in 1949. She remembers her protective concern for her brother, two years younger. There can be little doubt that in spite of several institutional disadvantages of this arrangement, it was better that the two stayed together rather than being put into separate foster homes. By contrast, a family consisting of two sisters aged 14 and 11 and their

brothers aged 12 and 7 were received into the care of the same authority following an eviction in the same year, 1949. The superintendent matron in charge of all the homes took the two girls to live in the large mixed home over which she presided. The older boy was consigned to another home with a married couple in charge. The boy of 7 was put into a third home by himself. He wept uncontrollably as his brother and sisters were taken off elsewhere. His housemother explained, "I knew I would get this one because matron doesn't like his dirty habits". A third example from the same authority in 1949 highlights segregation by category. The children inherited by the children's department were consolidated by preparing a card index of their names. Put into alphabetical order the surnames came together for the first time. It showed that a boy who came from the poor law had a brother committed to the care of the education authority as a 'fit person' and that their sister had been supervised by health visitors of the public health committee. Not until those three cards were shuffled together did anyone know that the three children were related. Authority 083, with 600 to 700 children in care, made a special principle to keep brothers and sisters together. Once in care, the children went to the same home, " ... if necessary waiting until a vacancy occurs so that they can all go together and they will only be considered for boarding out separately if that appears to be in the child's best interests." This broad principle is taken direct from the statute and adds nothing to the duty to treat every child according to his best interests.

10. 8 DEGREES OF SUCCESS IN KEEPING BROTHERS AND SISTERS TOGETHER

TABLE 10.8
Twelve Largest Authorities' Performance in Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together
England

Grade	Performance of Authority	Number of Authorities
1	Very Good	0
2	Good	3
3	Satisfactory	4
4	Below Satisfactory	2
5	Weak	2
0	Insufficient Evidence	1

Extracts from the inspectors' reports on the twelve authorities graded above:

Grade 2 : Three 'Good' Authorities

The policy of Authority 053 was that brothers and sisters had to be kept in touch and this was done by reviewing all children of a family at the same time and by taking brothers and sisters to meet each other. Short stay fostering was used especially to keep brothers and sisters together. Inspectors studied a sample of over 150 children who had one or more brothers or sisters in care. Of this sample more than half were living under the same roof as a brother or sister. About half of those living under the same roof were in foster homes. Only one of the 150 was not in touch with a brother or sister.

Inspectors commended Authority 062 which, by 1958, had considerably improved its performance, with many examples of families kept together. Foster parents were chosen partly on their estimated commitment to maintaining contact with relatives. Foster parents and child care officers cooperated in arranging meetings for children to meet their relatives. Some older child care officers paid lip service to the principle but seemed not to appreciate its value.

In the report on Authority 106, inspectors noted that child care officers had become more aware of the family's importance to the child and no longer thought of him in isolation. So far as possible one child care officer was appointed for a whole family, about which they remained knowledgeable and able to pass on news to separated brothers and sisters. Inspectors studied a sample of 123 children,

each of whom had one, two or three brothers or sisters in care. Of these, 79 (64%) were together in foster homes, 23 were separated in foster homes and 21 were in separate group residential care. None of the 21 who were in group residential care was living under the same roof as a brother or sister.

Grade 3 : Four 'Satisfactory' Authorities

Authority 028 seemed to have a definite policy of trying to keep brothers and sisters together and to reunite those who had been scattered in the past. Some families of eight or more children had been sent to voluntary homes where they were kept together.

Some children placed by Authority 036 in a voluntary home had been split up without consultation. The children's officer undertook to look into it. Brothers and sisters had been brought back to the districts from which they had been received into care, making parental contacts easier and rehabilitation more practicable. It was not always possible to care for these children under the same roof but they were placed closely enough to meet at play and at school. Increasing consideration was given to children's going 'home on trial'.

Inspectors noted, in Authority 050, directives from the children's officer and examination of individual instances by the assistant children's officer, to see that brothers and sisters were kept in touch. The child care officers had made a drive to keep them in touch, or at least to be aware of each other's whereabouts. Some 'neighbourhood boarding-out' had been achieved, with relatives and neighbours. Fifty-three foster parents had two foster children and fifteen had three, not necessarily brothers and sisters. All roman catholic children went to voluntary homes where brothers and sisters were separated but were said to have opportunities of meeting.

The committee of Authority 105 had a firm policy against splitting families. All multiple vacancies in 'family group homes' were reserved for groups of brothers and sisters. As early as 1953 inspectors noted 61 foster homes where brothers and sisters were boarded-out together. However, many went to voluntary homes where they were segregated by sex.

Grade 4 : Two 'Below Satisfactory' Authorities

The policy of Authority 034 was to allow splitting where there was thought to be no emotional tie, for example relatives of the half blood coming into care at different times. However, inspectors found six brothers and sisters distributed between three residential nurseries and a children's home because the nurseries were full and under-fives were not allowed in the large children's homes.

In Authority 067, several families in care were split up. Some brothers and sisters of the whole and of the half blood did not know of each others' existence or, if they did, could not remember meeting. These were left over from earlier years and the policy was stated to be against splitting except when unavoidable.

Grade 5 : Two 'Weak' Authorities

Authority 017 had a rule that no child under three should be cared for in a 'family group home', resulting, the inspectors said, in unnecessary break-up of families. Many houseparents thought they were discouraged from asking about the whereabouts of brothers and sisters and their cooperation in maintaining contacts seemed never to have been sought.

The system in Authority 018 militated against planning for brothers and sisters together. The children's officer remarked that foster homes taking brothers and sisters often broke down. Families were often separated, even in group residential care. The child care officers showed no great keenness about linking. Those admitting children into care often had no further responsibility, which might then be distributed among two or more other officers. Inspectors heard child care officers nonplussed when a child mentioned a brother or sister. Reports and suggestions made by two or more child care officers were almost certainly considered at different times. The inspectors were, however, told that plans for a child were always tied with those of brothers and sisters and there were a few comments on review reports urging more effort to keep brothers and sisters in contact.

10. 9 CONCLUSION

The main feature of these examples is that group residential care in the majority of cases did not result in brothers and sisters being kept together. In Authority 106, none of the 21 children was under the same roof as a brother or sister. All roman catholics in voluntary homes in Authority 050 went to voluntary societies where they were segregated by sex as did others from Authorities 105 and 034.

C H A P T E R E L E V E N

REVIEWING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

"Each responsible authority shall review in accordance with these Regulations the case of every child while he is looked after or provided with accommodation by them."

Regulation 2 of the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991 : In force from 14 October 1991

11. 1 THE ORIGIN OF REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

The duty to review some children's progress was included in statutory rules as early as 1933, when paragraph 40 of the Approved School Rules & Orders 1933 required:

" ... that managers shall review the progress made by any child towards the end of his first year at the school and least once a year thereafter and to consider at each review the date when he is likely to be let out on licence."

In 1946 a member of staff at Standon Farm School was killed by a boy with a rifle from the school's armoury. The consequences included substantial tightening up of school records by Statutory Instrument No 2052 in 1949. Although this rule was not published until 1949 the issue of records was in the mind of Dr Arthur Norris at the time of the formulation of the Children Act 1948. Neither the Monkton inquiry nor the Curtis Committee recommended systematic reviews of the welfare, condition and progress of children in care. Curtis said, however, in paragraph 493(iv):

"A progressive record should be kept of each child, including his family and personal history and the circumstances of his admission, his health history while in the Home, and any important developments in his behaviour or his school career. It should be used to provide qualified staff with information useful to them in the care of the child."

In 1946 new boarding out rules replaced those of 1933. Between August 1946 when the Curtis Report was signed and December 1946, somebody conceived the idea of **systematic reviews** of boarded out children's progress. Rule 20 required that:

"(1) The local authority to whose care a foster child has been committed shall arrange for a review by an appropriate committee of the progress of the child and such review shall be made at the expiration of three months from the date on which the child was committed to their care and thereafter at intervals of not more than six months.

"(2) A note of the committee's consideration shall be made in the record of each foster child."

The introduction of reviews, nearly two years before children's departments were formed, started a movement which was to transform the practice of social care, not only for children and not only in Britain. Its origin is attributed to Dr Arthur Norris, the chief inspector of the Home Office Children's Department. Four features of the rule ultimately ensured its effectiveness:

(i) Reviews were compulsory: it was not within the power of any local authority or voluntary society, any committee or any officer to resolve not to conduct reviews. Rule 22 enabled a local authority to apply to the Secretary of State for consent to a 'special arrangement' dispensing with the requirement to comply with one or more of the rules in special circumstances but there is no record of any such application's having been made with respect to Rule 20. It is hard to imagine circumstances which would justify an application for such consent.

(ii) Reviews had to be held before the expiry of a specified period of time. There was no power to postpone a review.

(iii) A review had to be conducted by 'an appropriate committee'.

(iv) A note of the committee's consideration had to be made in the record of the foster child.

11. 2 APPLICATION OF THE NEW PROCEDURES TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEES

Before 1948 the poor law code had provided for the house committees to interview

children newly-admitted to homes and to interview subsequently any child who asked to be seen by the committee ²⁵⁵. Simultaneously with the promulgation of the Boarding Out Rules, the Minister of Health made under the Poor Law Act an order in terms similar to the Home Secretary's rules and having virtually the same effect. For the first time the two ministries published a joint circular introducing the two instruments in a memorandum explaining their application ¹⁸⁵. However whereas the rules relating to children committed to care by a court required a first review not later than three months from the date of committal, the poor law order required the first review not later than three months from the date of boarding out. Thus there was no provision for review of poor law children in homes. On the same principle there was, after July 1948, no requirement to review children who had been received into care under Section 1 if they were being cared for in any way other than by boarding out.

11. 3 DEFINING THE DUTY TO REVIEW

Before the Children Act 1948, the Children & Young Persons (Boarding Out) Rules 1946 defined 'foster child' as every child who was in their care under a 'fit person order'. The duty to review committed children other than those boarded out then lapsed until it was reinstated by Section 27(4) of the 1969 act. No corresponding duty was laid on authorities and voluntary organisations in 1951 by the Administration of Children's Homes Regulations, for reviewing the health and progress of children in group residential care. But that is all of a piece with the philosophy of the times. Boarding out was a rewarding but relatively risky way of caring than was keeping children in group care under the eye of committee members and officers. There is no evidence that the incidence of harm to children is greater or less in one form of care. Unhappily some children continue to be harmed in group care, in foster care and in their own homes.

11. 4 CIRCULAR 160/48 ON PLANNING FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Home Office circular 160/48 of 8 July 1948 emphasised the importance of planning for children individually but made no reference to the use of reviews for this purpose. In paragraphs 6 and 7 it said:

"When a child is taken into care by a local authority, insight into the child's needs as an individual is required before a decision is taken as to the best method of providing him with a substitute home. The varied needs of the large number of boys and girls ... cannot be met treating them in accordance with a uniform plan. Often a right decision cannot be taken without a study of the particular child's requirements in the light of his health, personality, and conduct, and all the information that can be obtained as to the previous history and circumstances ... a skilled staff will study their individual characteristics. Care taken ... to select for each child the best method of providing him with a substitute home will reduce the risks of subsequent changes. It is of the first importance to give these children a sense of security and stability in their lives ... the careful study of each child's individual needs (is) requisite for the purpose of avoiding so far as possible the need for future changes and the disturbing effect produced on the child by breaking his relationships and transferring him to new surroundings."

11. 5 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE BOARDING OUT OF CHILDREN REGULATIONS 1955

Apart from Rule 20, governing reviews, under Rule 12(2) authorities had also to require visitors, " ... to make to them, after every visit, a report in writing as to the health, welfare and conduct of the child". This was couched in terms appropriate to the activities of committee members and other voluntary visitors who would previously have been inclined to report orally at committee meetings rather than in a formal written report. The visitors' duty was to report 'to the authority'. So at one and the same time there were two sets of reports on boarded out children to be made to authorities:

(i) Under Rule 12(2), generally every six weeks, a written report as to the health, welfare and conduct of the child and the condition of the foster home after each visit to a boarded out child.

(ii) Under Rule 20, generally every six months, a review by a committee of each boarded out child's progress, a note of which was to be made in the child's record.

11. 6 CHANGES IN 1955

On 1 January 1956 the Boarding Out Regulations 1955 came into force. Paragraph 22 required authorities:

"(i) ... to ensure that a review of the welfare, health, conduct and progress of every child who is boarded out by them is made in the light of the reports written about him in pursuance of these Regulations ...

"(ii) The said review shall be made, so far as possible by persons who do not usually act as visitors, and a note thereof shall be entered in the case record relating to the child, and particularly of any action recommended as a result."

The 1955 regulations made three significant innovations. First they expanded the list of features to be looked into. Secondly the reviews could now be conducted so far as possible by persons who did not normally act as visitors. This was taken to mean the reviews could continue to be carried out by committees but that, alternatively, they could be carried out by senior officers of the department but not by main grade child care officers. Thirdly, particulars were to be noted of any action recommended as a result of the review. This was the origin of 'the action paragraphs'. There was still no obligation to review children in residential group care.

11. 7 CONFUSION BETWEEN VISITORS' REPORTS AND REVIEWS

In the early days, the task of dealing with the mass of paper tended to take second place to the pressing problems of setting up a new department and at the same time fending off the bombardment from all sides of new applications for reception into care. It is small wonder that compliance with the rule about reviews was put into effect only by degrees, fired more by social workers' established professional practices than by obedience to statutory rules. There was a much urgency to review the circumstances of children in group residential care, especially nurseries, before it was too late. Some authorities began such

reviews in the early months, laying as much stress on the child's parents' circumstances as upon the child's 'progress'.

11. 8 HOW ONE AUTHORITY RESPONDED TO THE TWO REQUIREMENTS

In Authority 080, by late 1948, visits to boarded out children were made exclusively by salaried officers, called 'boarding out officers'. Every visitor's report, after every visit, was written in longhand. After being read and initialled by the children's officer the forms were divided into batches, each lot being sent by post to one or other member of the case committee who was expected to read and initial them and bring them back to the next committee meeting, at which it was customary for the members to put questions directly to the boarding out officers. The authority started with about a hundred children boarded out, the supervision being shared by two boarding out officers. With monthly case committees that meant, before each meeting, distributing about 70 forms and subsequently retrieving and filing them. Simultaneously the boarding out officers were completing foolscap review forms at the appropriate intervals. These review forms, on paper of a different colour to avoid confusion, were distributed in the same way, by post to committee members. A note was then made on the form of the date of the committee meeting, together with any comments which the committee wanted to be recorded and the form was then filed with the child's other records, thus satisfying Rule 20(2). In ordinary families reviewing a child's progress is a continual process, going on informally from day to day, as events occur: the baptism, the first word, the first step, the first tooth and later the school reports, visits to the doctor, further education, culminating in choice of a career and plans to leave home are all likely to be discussed as they occur and as the need to make decisions is foreseen. The conduct of reviews, vital though it is, highlights the tragic reality of life in

public care. No doubt most foster parents, nursery matrons and house parents watch the health and development of children in their care as eagerly as natural parents and with a higher than average degree of responsibility. The difference from biological or adoptive parenting is that in public care the responsibility is **shared** between the day-to-day carers and the management whose inescapable duty is to oversee the performance of those looking after the child.

11. 9 LESSONS FROM THE SINGLE CASE STUDY

The importance of conducting reviews properly is illustrated in the single case study of the Curtis Family in the appendix. The authority in whose care they were went through the operation of reviewing, as paper exercises without adequate thought. Although the authority had a high reputation and Miss Moss and her colleagues were conscientious, the pressure under which they and senior colleagues worked was such that much of the misery endured by this family, as a result of their being in care, might have been averted. So many chances to meliorate the boys' misery were missed that a complete catalogue of them would make this chapter twice as long. Examples of the big issues not sufficiently discussed were:

- (1) Getting the boys home again, as was suggested to Miss Moss by the assistant children's officer and by the child guidance clinic.
- (2) Helping the four brothers to keep in touch as they clearly wished to do.
- (3) Collating the medical advice on John's condition and treatment which was all recorded as markedly differing hearsay from several separate specialties, with never a sight of a doctor's letter of of the medical records which the authority was obliged to maintain.

This list could be trebled without exhausting the need for more entries, but there is only room here for a couple more notes of matters which (or may not) be judged trivial.

(a) The headmaster of John's boarding school wrote to ask about the possibility of his being prepared for confirmation by the bishop. Miss Moss sent an abrupt and unhelpful reply without consulting John or his mother.

(b) It was discovered that John had been for two terms in his boarding school without receiving any pocket money although at the preceding review the subject had been dismissed by writing "pocket money according to scale" at the relevant place on the review form.

In the early reports on this authority the inspectors showed a high opinion of the standard of work, especially in the area which was responsible for the Curtis boys. Inspectors recorded that reviews were conducted regularly and systematically. However, they criticised the large number of reviews which an assistant children's officer was expected to discuss in the course of a half-day visit to the area office. By 1967 there was a new breed of inspector: people with long and recent experience of work under the 1948 act. They found that reviews were superficial with frequent failure to record:

- (a) discussion with the child about his family
- (b) the other children in a foster home
- (c) contacts with parents and brothers and sisters
- (d) religion

In reply to criticism, Miss Moss said that she and her colleagues knew all the cases so well that it was unnecessary to record all the action taken (Home Office File CHN 736/1/1).

11.10 ATTITUDES OF THE INSPECTORATE

The inspectors continually urged authorities to comply with Regulation 22 relating to boarded out children. As late as 1962 the chief inspector herself sought an interview with the children's committee of Authority 116 to draw attention to repeated serious breaches of the boarding out regulations, including failure to conduct reviews and because the boarding out officers counted as visits, within

the statutory intervals, casual meeting with foster mothers in the street or seeing the children at school or in the office. The chief executive at first replied that the committee was unwilling to meet the inspectorate since the criticisms did not relate to the quality of care given to the children but only to the "paperwork". Inspectors did not pay the same degree of attention to the way in which authorities were reviewing children in group residential care since there was not, until 1970, any duty to do this. Among a series of written reviews by a housemother in 1949, concerning children in her charge, one simply read, "'Very good boy in the Home". Of course, inspectors emphasised the need to focus on the content of reviews, as well as on their frequency. In 1957, in Authority 022, decisions were entered in red and signed by the chair but inspectors criticised the reports as being:

" ... not in any particular form and in our view do not provide sufficient information for it to be said that welfare, health, conduct and progress has been covered."

Inspectors said that crucial facts were omitted from reviews.

"In 1962, in Authority 117, a foster father was charged with a minor theft. He had been drinking and his defence was that he was in possession of the stolen articles involved to return them to their owner. The case was dismissed. No mention of this was made in the review report. The child care officer said that she was sure she had reported it orally and that it had been decided to leave the children in the foster home but this was not recorded as a committee decision.

"A disabled boy, aged 17, was boarded out with a family where the foster father served 18 months for incest and his daughter was committed to care. The 17 year old boy wanted to stay in the foster home and he was allowed to do so. Inspectors did not criticise this decision but thought that the whole affair should have been recorded. It was not."

As late as 1965 inspectors criticised the small Authority 111 because:

" ... the children's officer is obviously reluctant to educate the committee and delegate to them any real responsibility under Regulation 22(2)."

Inspectors were pleased, in 1963, with the arrangements in small Authority 088:

"The review of the progress of children in residential visits is a continuing process. The child care officers visit regularly and have assumed responsibility for the children whom they admit. They know the children and they discuss their progress. This includes an assessment of their suitability for boarding out. They also submit reports on the other local authorities' children and copies are sent to the authority concerned ... but the field officers only visit to admit or discharge a child. They have been invited to attend the quarterly meeting. To this extent they are better informed about the children but it has not led to any apparent action to rehabilitate or board out many of the children. Pressure has still to come from the staff here."

In a survey of boarding out in Authority 101 inspectors, in 1963, reported that arrangements for review were in accordance with regulation 22. A clerk submitted all the child care officers' reports to the monthly review meeting attended by the children's officer, the deputy children's officer and the assistant children's officer.

"The child care officers do not take part unless there is a special need to do so. The review is based on the study of the case files and the knowledge of those present. The clerk, Miss D is a mine of information on children in care. The children reviewed are again considered briefly at the next meeting of the committee. The same group of officers review, at six-monthly intervals, the children in 'family groups'.

It is difficult to envisage from this inspector's report what degree of attention each child received. In 1956, inspectors reported an unusual arrangement in Authority 126. The provision, in paragraph 22 that reviews should be carried out "by persons who do not ordinarily act as visitors", had been taken to mean that the reviewing officer should personally visit the foster home at each review. The senior child care officer was visiting over a hundred foster homes twice each year. The inspectors said it was doubtful if it was wise to continue this arrangement, which might upset the child care officers' relationships with the families. The visits were apparently discontinued.

11.11 A QUARTERLY REPORT ON A CHILD IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

An example of a report submitted by the house parent of a cottage home to the

central office was published in 1951 in the first report of Authority 028 :

" XXXXXXXXXXXX Cottage

XXXXXXXXXXXX Children's Home

Surname : xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Christian Names : David

Date of Birth : [REDACTED]

School attended : County Primary

Church attended : Congregational

Contact with Relatives : Mother has visited him. Sends occasional parcels.

Contacts with friends : David goes out to tea with a friend occasionally and has friends normally at school

Health (bedwetting, etc) : Incontinent at times. Stuttering speech. Has been under observation for chest and lungs. Condition normal now.

Hobbies and interests : David likes best to collect insects - butterflies and small creatures of all kinds. He enjoys out-of-door pursuits. He is a good mixer, and all the children like him to join in imaginative games and 'dressing up'.

Behaviour : David can be normally naughty at times, but not unruly or disobedient, and is a very likeable little lad. He is talkative and amusing in spite of his hesitant speech, and very pleased if he can help around the house with small duties. He can easily be led away by the other boys and sometimes has played truant.

Any other remarks : His school standard of work is below normal for his age.

Date : 8.11.50

Signed "

As quarterly reports went in 1950 this should be highly rated but not taken as typical of the level of care generally devoted to such reports at that time. It reflects well on the housemother. It pays attention to the important topics of contact with parents and with friends outside the home. A housemother sitting down on her own to write a batch of reports could hardly be expected to do better than this. Her exercise could have been more productive if a colleague, such as the child care officer in touch with the mother, could have attended as routine. Writing a report on her own on each of a dozen or so children, four times a year, must have been an unstimulating experience and of course it was one-way traffic. In the the course of this lonely task the housemother was getting no feedback. It was a brave and competent effort for its time. The single sentence report quoted above, "Very good boy in the Home", was more representative of reports on children in group residential care in 1950.

11.12 STANDARD OF REVIEWS IN THE TWELVE LARGEST AUTHORITIES

TABLE 11.12
Twelve Largest Authorities' Standard of Reviews
England

Grade	Performance of Authority	Number of Authorities
1	Very Good	1
2	Good	2
3	Satisfactory	4
4	Below Satisfactory	4
5	Weak	1

Extracts from the inspectors' reports on each of the twelve authorities graded above:

Grade 1 : One 'Very Good' Authority

All members of a family were reviewed simultaneously in Authority 053, using forms asking specific questions. Child care officers read their reviews to the case sub-committee, the members of which asked sensible questions and followed up from previous reports. Child care officers subsequently met with the children's officer to decide on further action.

Grade 2 : Two 'Good' Authorities

Inspectors said that child care officers attended area sub-committees for half-yearly reviews in Authority 029. They generally showed a good knowledge of the children. Area children's officers consulted subsequently with the central office.

The files in Authority 067 were fully informative, with family history and review sheet. A sub-committee meeting received review reports based on the child care officers' reports at which a senior administrative officer attended to record decisions and see that they were carried out.

Grade 3 : Four 'Satisfactory' Authorities

The children's officer or the assistant children's officer of Authority 018 reviewed the files at statutory intervals and discussed them with the child care officers. Brothers and sisters were not necessarily reviewed simultaneously, or by the same child care officers.

Child care officers presented reports to area boarding out committees of Authority 028 whose observations and recommendations were recorded in the minutes, but not on the child's file.

Although reviews were required from 1946 onwards, Authority 034 did not start reviewing until the regulations were revised in 1956. The inspectors found no fault with the system then established.

In Authority 036 inspectors saw, "an earnest endeavour to ensure a thorough review but ... its compilation is tedious and the form is not designed for ease of typing". Assistant children's officers visited the area offices and discussed 30 or 40 children in one afternoon, based on the review forms completed in the area.

Grade 4 : Four 'Below Satisfactory' Authorities

Inspectors reported that each child care officer reported orally twice a year to the boarding out sub-committee of Authority 050, but gave little information to the committee, which was pressed for time: the members sometimes asked questions. The only record was a date stamp on the child's file.

Two areas in Authority 062 had discontinued reviewing, through pressure of work. The deputy children's officer saw reports made by area children's officers on their own cases, but at least one area children's officer had received no comments from the deputy in response.

In Authority 105, team leaders had to buttonhole committee members before the monthly meeting and persuade them to read review reports, which gave vague and incomplete information. Team leaders repeatedly used the single word 'satisfactory' under a variety of headings in the reports, which did not do justice to the fieldwork.

The review forms were not adequately completed in Authority 106 and guidance to inexperienced child care officers through reviews was also inadequate.

Grade 5 : One 'Weak' Authority

The inspectors got a promise from the children's officer of authority 017 to change the procedure, which did not comply with the regulations. Sheafs of copied or edited reports on visits were sent to the children's officer who initialled them after they had been commented on by senior staff, in isolation from the children's files. The comments were then summarised and presented to area committees.

11.13 CONCLUSION - AND CONFUSION

Some misunderstanding about the purpose of reviews persisted throughout the twenty-three years. They had been introduced in the Boarding Out Rules of 1946. In one sense they were procedures implicit in the conduct of any profession from

accountancy to zoology, and were statutory reminders to 'stop and think from time to time'. The herding of children and others had, under the poor law at least since 1834, been conducted collectively for economy and control. Similar procedures had characterised the activities of education departments, notably in remand homes and approved schools. There must have been close cooperation between the Home Office and the Ministry of Health before the two sets of virtually identical rules were simultaneously introduced, but their provenance cannot now be discovered. The value of the statutory requirement was that it had helped people act professionally who might otherwise not have done so. Before 1946 people thought deeply about those in their care. They must have been relieved to have parliamentary sanction to use time and resources to do what they wanted to do anyway. Some missed the point. Inspectors reported, in 1956, that the children's officer of Authority 143 had discontinued periodical 'case conferences' with the staff of homes, "because the houseparents indiscreetly passed on information to the children": a far cry from after 1971 when it was urged that children and parents had a right to attend reviews. That was never within the contemplation of children's committees: a bridge which must be left for others to cross. Meanwhile reviews have acquired the authority deriving from judicial recognition. In **Reg v Avon County Council, Ex parte Katoula Koumis etc : 20.3.84**, the judge said that, before taking a decision to close a home, there should be a review of each individual child's circumstances. Ruth Sinclair concluded, in 1984, that social workers were confused about the purpose of reviews ³⁷⁶:

"Should they monitor -

- (a) supervision
- (b) implementation of child care decisions
- (c) making of decisions

or provide -

(i) managerial information or

(ii) a route for participation by children and their families?

In her sample, less than a quarter of all the important decisions were ever made at reviews. There was much 'self assessed' implementation of review decisions by social workers: decisions often lacked time scales and precision. She considered that key decisions were not generally made at reviews. They should be developed on explicitly managerial lines to monitor decision making and implementation.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MODES OF CARE

"Whereas the best foster home care should be used to the maximum ... it would be wrong, in view of the limitations placed on boarding out by the number of good foster homes available, not to develop an alternative form of compensating care."

Paragraph 462
The Curtis Report

12. 1 PREFERENCE FOR BOARDING OUT

These recommendations led to serious differences among the people who became children's officers. Some, coming new to the work, took them very seriously. Some, who had been in the work a long time felt they had already covered what could practicably be done in the area. Some councillors who had good relations with the staff of homes did not want to see them discouraged. Most authorities thought they were among the best and that Curtis had been set up to improve the performance of other authorities. The requirement to board out was repealed some twenty years later by Section 49 of the Children & Young Persons Act 1969 and would now be better expressed as follows:

"The sub-division of modes into two categories - institutional care and boarding out - tells us nothing about the experiences of children. Many institutional modes of care can be sensitive and thoughtful. And vice versa. Many boarded out placements can be harsh and cruel. This leads us to the conclusion that the difference is an administrative one - whether the arrangement falls under the Boarding Out Regulations or the Administration of Children's Homes Regulations - whether the householder owns or rents the premises and can demand the child's removal or whether ownership of the premises belongs to the employer and the employee must keep the child until the owner makes other arrangements."

Curtis was right to emphasise boarding out and the practice had increased from 35% to 48% by 1970. But their assumptions were based on 'the best foster home

care' and all others should be in group residential care. If the architects of the Children Act 1948 intended to combine, in one department of each local authority, responsibility for providing substitute care for all youngsters under eighteen who needed it, they failed in this endeavour. When the curtain went up on 5 July 1948 it revealed a stage, peopled in the main by babies, toddlers and school children up to their fourteenth birthdays. A few older adolescents stuck out like lighthouses, o'er-topping the sea of under-fifteens. At times it seems that children's officers were like choreographers, manipulating the scene on stage by moving solo dancers and chorus lines to and fro. Some of the chorus were resting, perhaps sitting cross-legged at either side of the stage. These were the seven thousand 'children who wait' as they were to be dubbed by Jane Rowe and Lydia Lambert ³⁵³. They were the stagnant population in the authorities' own establishments. Off-stage, and out of sight, were thousands of children largely forgotten by the local authorities, in approved schools, voluntary homes, privately-owned places and institutions for children with various kinds of disability. These youngsters, mostly living away from their home districts would have impinged on the thoughts of the public assistance and education officers four times a year when the bills for their maintenance came in for payment. Centre stage were the solo dancers, tripping hither and thither to the alarming music of recurrent crises caused by emergency admissions, shortages of group carers, foster home breakdowns and sudden discharges from private homes and schools.

12. 2 MODES OF PUBLIC CARE IN 1946

The Curtis Committee had estimated the number of children in public care as follows:

TABLE 12.2 Numbers of Children in Various Modes of Care :
Curtis Committee's Estimates
England and Wales : 1946

	Poor Law	Court Orders	Min of Pensions	Former Evacuees	TOTAL
Boarded Out	4,892	6,000	400	3,000	14,292
Nursery	3,044	-----	---	-----	3,044
Scattered Homes	4,662	-----	---	-----	4,662
Group Cottage	7,024	-----	---	-----	7,024
Other Homes (Inc Remand)	5,209	5,640	11	1,900	12,760
Boarding School for Handicapped	657	-----	---	-----	657
Hostel for Working Children	350	-----	---	-----	350
Workhouse	3,456	-----	---	-----	3,456
Voluntary Homes	3,941	3,100	---	300	7,341
Lodgings	-----	125	---	-----	125
Approved School	-----	11,200	---	-----	11,200
TOTAL	33,235	26,065	411	5,200	64,911

12. 3 BROAD CHANGES IN NUMBERS BETWEEN 1936 AND 1971

The most surprising characteristic of the use made of public care for children during the years under review is that (after an increase of about twenty percent during the first four years) the total numbers in care, including those in approved schools, remained remarkably steady. Although the impression gained at the time by some practitioners under pressure was of constantly having to submit to great waves of irresistible demand, the cool figures presented a different picture.

**TABLE 12.3 Number of Children in Various Modes of Care
England and Wales
Selected Years between 1946 and 1971**

	May 46	Nov 52	Mar 56	Mar 61	Mar 66	Mar 71
Boarded Out	14,292	26,277	27,098	29,057	31,816	30,217
Reception Home	-----	1,167	1,429	1,553	1,949	2,627
Nursery	3,044	5,035	4,443	3,432	3,032	2,500
Family Group	4,662	4,218	4,130	5,303	7,126	9,012
Group Cottage	7,024	7,213	-----	-----	-----	-----
Other Home	16,216	7,251	11,682	9,248	7,882	7,445
Special, Handicap	657	1,998	2,206	2,041	2,127	2,301
Home in Care	-----	-----	-----	-----	4,387	12,269
Workers' Hostel	350	1,049	1,148	1,000	1,033	1,312
Workhouse	3,456	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Voluntary Home	7,341	6,549	4,584	3,579	4,895	5,480
Other Accmmtn	-----	3,925	3,362	5,220	3,147	4,629
Lodgings	125	-----	979	1,017	1,203	1,552
Residentl Work	-----	-----	1,286	748	560	379
Approved Schl	11,200	9,079	6,667	8,094	8,648	7,654
TOTAL MAINTAINED	68,367	73,761	69,014	70,292	77,805	87,377
% In Care per 1,000 Children	---	---	0.53	0.50	0.53	0.65
% Boarded Out	20.89	35.60	39.27	41.33	40.89	41.30

The figures for 1952 onwards are from the series of command papers published from that year, supplemented by the more detailed cyclostyled analyses, copies of which were sent to local authorities from 1963²¹⁷. The heading 'Workhouses'

is an adaptation of the classification in the Curtis Report comprising:

" ... all institutions ('Workhouses') maintained by the Public Assistant departments of local authorities, in which children are cared for as part of the responsibility of those who are also responsible for the care of destitute adults."

Curtis described the plight of some of these children in detail and one of the first tasks of authorities under the Children Act was to transfer these children to more appropriate care. Curtis counted 3,456 children in sick wards of hospitals and institutions and all there have been placed in Table 12.2 under the heading 'Workhouse'. The 3,044 children whom Curtis counted in 'nurseries and other wards' have been shown in Table 12.2 under the heading 'Nursery'. Curtis counted 3,000 former evacuees in foster homes and 1,900 in other homes. All but eleven of the 400 children in the care of the Ministry of Pensions were in foster homes, often with relatives.

12. 4 THE CURTIS COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS

The committee devoted paragraphs 476 to 496 of their report to a section headed, 'Institutions (Residential Communities). They said that on the whole they were impressed with the undemanding attitude of staff working in conditions which precluded comfort and privacy in leisure hours, but there were severe shortages of staff (except in nurseries where training was offered). The poor accommodation and conditions made it difficult to retain staff even when found.

Paragraphs 173 and 174 said:

"So far from being able to recruit trained or experienced workers they were often unable to recruit anyone at all."

It is a measure of the demands made on staff that the committee singled out one group of cottage homes for special commendation in paragraph 175:

"We found an excellent system of reliefs which gave the housemothers one long weekend in four (Friday to Tuesday) - set out on a chart by means of coloured discs showing just when and where the relief was due - letting the foster mother know in

advance not only when her weekend was due but that it was actually arranged."

If this was exceptionable what must it have been like to work in less well run authorities? The committee was often impressed with staff who, with little leisure or privacy, took an individual interest in the children and maintained good standards of physical care. Some had progressive views, but often their ambition was higher than their capacity. Schemes had been tried which were too difficult for untrained staff to fulfill. Some good quality staff had sacrificed themselves out of concern for the children: others had, in wartime, been 'directed' into the work and had discovered a bent for it (Paragraph 177).

12. 5 WAS THERE A NEED FOR GROUP CARE?

Curtis thought that, "the need for institutional care must be faced", making the best attainable substitutes for the private homes. Some of the committee's witnesses had foreseen the gradual elimination of the institution by reducing the number of deprived children to those for whom good foster homes could be found. The committee doubted whether the service could be brought near that stage within fifteen years. There would continue to be children who could not be fostered though it was hoped there would be fewer. Communal living could be satisfactorily developed as the alternative to boarding out. The institution, or large residential community, had certain advantages - swimming baths, gymnasias, large halls for entertainment, a greater choice of friends and often the society of more cultivated and educated people. The disadvantages were the tendency to remote and impersonal relationships. Children in homes were physically well cared for but the committee was convinced that, on the human and emotional side, they continually felt the lack of affection and personal interest.

12. 6 CURTIS' PRESCRIPTION FOR RESIDENTIAL GROUP CARE :
 THE 'FAMILY GROUP HOME'

After very careful consideration the committee concluded that the disadvantages of group care could best be remedied in a small group of various ages under trained and sympathetic houseparents. The concept of the 'family group home' was enshrined in paragraphs 478 and 485:

"Once admitted to the group the expectation would be that the child should grow up to the age of 15 or 16 as the housemother's personal charge, and should come to feel some of the same reliance on her concern and affection that the more fortunate child has towards his own mother. This does not mean there should be an embargo on other opportunities for the child, eg, adoption, should these present themselves."

The committee could not agree a satisfactory maximum but, in paragraph 485, thought that eight was the ideal number of children since:

"A 'family' of eight is not an impossible conception even in present day conditions, and it will allow of the protective relation between older and young children which is profitable for both. The older children will also give the kind of assistance to the housemothers in the house that they would give to their own mothers."

The sexes should be mixed, subject to a euphemistic proviso which has since passed into the vocabulary of child care; that there should be:

" ... provision for removing the adolescent boy or girl, or indeed any younger child, who seems to need a different environment."

In other words that the staff could no longer put up with his or her disruptive behaviour and wanted the child's removal to a better staff regime like a hostel for maladjusted children or to an approved school. A perfectly legitimate demand. The merits and demerits of employing married couples were discussed, but the implication of paragraph 485, nowhere explicit, was that one woman on her own could run such a home, with daily help for cleaning and possibly for mending, as had been done in voluntary homes before the war.

12. 7

RESIDENTIAL NURSERIES

Curtis wanted to see babies in separate nurseries for not more than twenty, sited near the cottage homes, to give specialised attention to their physical needs. These nurseries would take all children under a year old and those under two-and-a-half years who had not yet been boarded out or placed in a 'family group'. If possible the nursery children should be in small groups during the day, each continuously in the care of one nurse. A nursery child over twelve months might move to a 'family group home' if the housemother was fully trained, especially if there was nursery schooling available. In paragraphs 478 and 479, the committee said that their proposals involved local authorities' providing nurseries and group or 'scattered' for all normal healthy children who were not boarded out or in voluntary homes.

12. 8

GROUPED AND SCATTERED HOMES

In 1939 forty percent of the children in local authority homes had been in grouped homes. Praiseworthy effort to get nearer to the family atmosphere than can be done in a larger institution. Criticisms were:

- 1 some groups were too large
- 2 the precise similarity of the dwellings was depressing
- 3 there was often no separate playroom or place for homework or other quiet occupation
- 4 there were not enough separate bedrooms for the over twelves
- 5 sometimes there was only an asphalt playground and no garden.

The committee thought that from some points of view the 'scattered home', an ordinary house in an ordinary street, was preferable, the children being more easily absorbed into the life of the neighbourhood. The disadvantages were the possible social and professional isolation of the housemother who certainly needed some relief. It was most harmful to children to be in charge of an

unhappy woman. The housemother should take an interest in all the children's activities, allowing them to visit the homes of other children and to ask them back, join scout and guide troops and go with them to the swimming baths. Measures should be taken to avoid the children's forming a separate group of 'homes children' within a school. If numbers were too large to be absorbed, a recognised primary school should be established within the institution, admitting also children from the neighbourhood. Curtis said, in paragraph 493, grouped homes needed one housemother for ten children, plus assistance and relief: nurseries needed a much higher ratio.

12. 9 HOSTELS FOR EVACUEES

The committee regretted that local authorities had been slow in taking over from the Ministry of Health the hostels for evacuated children who were maladjusted. The presence of maladjusted children in ordinary children's homes caused great disturbance and prevented the staff's doing their best work with the other children. In paragraph 493 Curtis was clear about the difference between 'ordinary children's homes' and 'therapeutic communities'.

12.10 BOARDING SCHOOLS

The committee dismissed boarding schools as not being in any real sense 'homes', but provided the child had a foster home for the holidays, spending the term in a boarding school might be best for children coming into care too old to go into a family group. The tale of Tom Curtis, in the Appendix, who spent ten terms at a boarding school and went to a different place to spend six of the intervening holidays, illustrates the misery attributable to inappropriate use of boarding schools. Advocacy of boarding schools for deprived children was fuelled by the charities for orphans of parents who died in military service and

other charitable funds for part-orphaned children. Much of their promotional literature showed pride in having paid for children to go to boarding schools, thus effectively depriving them of the day-to-day care of the surviving parent and often shifting them into a culture alien to that they were used to before their bereavement and alien to that of the surviving relatives. It is fair to add that many of the surviving parents welcomed this arrangement as did some of the children.

12.11 APPROVED SCHOOLS

The committee thought that it would still be necessary for some children in need of care or protection to go to approved schools. They were for the really difficult or unruly child, and the child who was exposed to very depraved influences. Differences between the delinquent children and the unruly ones were often merely those of accident. The committee thought the boys' approved schools were, in the main, conducted in a humane and experimental spirit, despite a tendency to regimentation, a lack of facilities for the cultivation of individual interests and insufficient feminine influence. The committee was less keen on senior girls' schools which were attempting to handle a problem to which no satisfactory answer had been found. In 1952, John Gittins, in his book, 'The Approved School Boy, hinted at the ethos of the approved school by asserting:

"Security and affection often bring stability of behaviour with surprising speed. The difficulty is that so much as to be done in so short a time. The constant problem of training is to prevent the formation of behaviour which is simply a veneer ... the great desire of the boy is to get out, to go on licence. To achieve this he seeks to exhibit a socially acceptable pattern of behaviour but, valuable as the resultant habit training may be, if the essential attitudes remain crude the training is basically ineffective."

He hoped that the children would find their security but was dubious about the value of attempts at habit training. No doubt some children did find this

affectonate relationship with parental figures in approved schools and experienced another permanent deprivation when they left the school. An appraisal of 'Community Homes with Education' was made by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools at the invitation of the Department of Health and Social Security. These successors to the former approved schools were, for the most part, in the same buildings with residents of the same characteristics and staff from the same backgrounds.

"All the pupils need a period of stability, an opportunity to form relationships with caring adults and to come to terms with their own problems in an environment designed to help solve them."

The inspectors confirmed that the pupils suffered disadvantages associated with previous unsatisfactory relationships at home and at school. The pupils' attainments came nowhere near matching their abilities. By taking account of individual needs, attempts should be made to re-motivate pupils whose interest in formal learning had long disappeared. Features which the inspectors found encouraging included:

- a "development of social skills, helping pupils to make a good impression at job interviews
- b "strenuous efforts to resolve problems posed by outbursts of aggressive behaviour
- c "varied programmes of physical education including gymnastics, individual and team games, athletics and swimming, competition not being overdone and pupils helped to develop competence and confidence"

Against these commendations were set a list of deficiencies. The staff worked under grave difficulties with a changing clientele of under-achievers experiencing discontinuity in family and living arrangements, providing an education isolated from normal educational practice as well as from educational support services in the locality, failing to attract experienced teachers or to provide a programme of guidance and social education for adult responsibilities and lacking close working relationships between teachers and care staff.

While recommending, after adoption and boarding out, the small residential family unit, the committee put in a word for the limited use of the larger home for about 30 children, which they thought might be more successful for 'the abnormal group'. Hostels for twenty to thirty difficult or maladjusted children had been notably successful. Paragraph 494 said:

"The unstable child appears to do better in a community with many activities and friends to choose from, and with an expert in charge of discipline ... an exceptionally competent and sympathetic superintendent and matron and visiting advisors qualified in the treatment of childish abnormalities ... in a sense a residential child guidance clinic. Some experiments have been made ... with homes of this type as centres on a group of foster homes. The superintendent of the home is a friend, advisor and supervisor of the foster parents, and a child who is for some reason unmanageable can be brought into the home for rehabilitation."

Whether or not a child displaying socially unacceptable behaviour went to a residential establishment for maladjusted children or to an approved school depended partly upon the child's age and degree of disturbance and partly on the accident whether his needs first received the attention of the child psychiatric services or of the police. Whether, having been 'ascertained' as needing special educational treatment as a maladjusted pupil, he went to a hostel or a boarding school depended partly upon what was available at the time, as is illustrated in the Appendix in the case of John Curtis. The difference between a hostel and a boarding school is that, from the former, the children go out to school and, in the the latter, schooling is provided on the premises. A child identified as being maladjusted and judged to need care away from home might find himself in one (or a succession) of a variety of places, all of which were reckoned to provide 'special educational treatment'. The Underwood Committee on Maladjusted Children said, in paragraphs viii to x of their report ⁰⁷⁹:

"If relationships within the family become seriously disturbed, it may not be possible to repair them unless the child leaves home for a time ... but such treatment should be given only if it is

clear that there is no hope of treating the child successfully while he remains at home."

They saw delinquency, truancy, unmanageable or intolerant behaviour, jealousy between the children or low mentality of parents as indicators for giving parents and children a respite from each other " ... and both child and parents can be helped to look at the situation more objectively and so overcome their difficulties." The aims might include:

- a providing a temporary substitute for his own home in which the child could feel emotional security and establish satisfactory relationships
- b special teaching when emotional disturbance was impeding academic progress
- c child guidance treatment to make the child fit to return home and the home fit to receive him

Short term observation away from home might sometimes be necessary before a recommendation about 'placement' could be made, and for this purpose observation and reception homes provided under Section 15 of the Children Act might be used. Essential in every case was:

" ... a plan of campaign to fit the circumstances, that the responsibility should be settled for the different parts of it, and that the local education authority should watch over it as a whole and take any initiative and make any adjustments needed."

Those recommending and providing residential treatment should have a clear idea of what they hoped to achieve. They should ask if there was a possibility that the child might never, in childhood, be able to live at home and what arrangements might have to be made when he left school. If this was likely it would be better for him to be received into care under the Children Act and provided with " ... a suitable home - with foster parents or in a children's home ... ordinary boarding schools are no solution ... unless the child is also provided with a stable home background". The committee saw provision for a maladjusted child away from home as a bewildering task, demanding the skill of

Socrates in asking the right questions and the wisdom of Solomon in answering them. The committee said that a hostel, where the maladjusted child went out to an ordinary school was essentially a substitute for a child's own home. It was unlikely to be suitable for very disturbed or withdrawn children who would not fit into an ordinary day school or who needed a consistent and protective environment throughout twenty-four hours.

12.13 THE 'ADJUSTMENT HOME'

This type of home was based on the concept that it was positively helpful to some children to be cared for in what the child recognised as a 'neutral' setting where he or she was not expected to adopt the filial attitudes and ways of a child in an artificial family. It was thus hoped to help the child to come to terms with deprivation. Deprivation meant not having a home in which to belong with parents and, maybe, brothers and sisters. This deprivation was often compounded by having lived in a number of other places with a number of other people; in children's homes and foster homes, none of whom had accepted him for keeps. The 'adjustment home' had to be small enough to provide individual attention and affection but on the understanding that it was not intended as a substitute for the kind of family ties which the child may have experienced in his own family and which (partly in reality and partly in fantasy) he observed his school mates to be enjoying. Both children and staff were expected to recognise that the arrangement was for a limited term, without the lifelong kinship obligations implied within biological, adoptive and long-term foster families. In 1964, 'Children in Homes' said ⁰³⁸:

"The purpose of an adjustment home is, however, entirely different from a family group home. It is used for the relatively short-term care of children who show disturbances of behaviour, or whose attitude is such that it is considered inadvisable, for the time being, to place them in foster homes. This type of home has evolved from the family group home because child-caring agencies have

discovered that the more intimate attention which is given in a small group by understanding and patient houseparents often enables a child to get more insight into his situation and to adopt attitudes which enable him to be acceptable again in his own home or in a foster home. There is no literature on this topic, other than that relating generally to the care of maladjusted children. Numbers vary from four up to eight. The children are mostly of school age. The sexes are usually mixed, but it may be found advisable to care for very disturbed older children in a home kept exclusively for one sex. The adjustment home needs a bigger staff than the family group home. Whereas in the latter type of home the staff go on holiday with the children and have time off together by arranging for someone to come in for one evening a week, in the former it is essential to have full-time professional staff on duty all the time and for them to have at least a day and a half off every week, and generous holidays away from the children. There must be three resident staff so that when one is away on holiday or sick leave it is still possible for the other two to have time off. This may be achieved by employing three single women or a married couple and a woman assistant. The husband and wife ... may be able to take an annual holiday together by temporarily employing an additional assistant or by arranging for most of the children to go elsewhere on holiday at the same time. The adjustment home may experience many of the difficulties of the family home. In addition, it has to cope with serious behaviour and disciplinary problems. These difficulties are made more acute by reason of the proximity of staff to children. The small group encourages the child to display his feelings in a way which he would be unlikely to do in a crowd. The staff live so close to the children that it is difficult for them to get away from stressful situations, except when they are out of the house altogether. Adjustment homes differ from hostels for maladjusted children in that they are run by the ordinary child-caring agencies and not under psychiatric direction. The child guidance services are, of course, available for treating children and advising staff in the same way as for children in their own homes. Children may remain for a short period or a very long one, but it is usual for them to leave for home or foster home after two or three years."

12.14 THE REQUIREMENT TO CHOOSE BOARDING OUT

Section 13 of the 1948 act set out a hierarchy of preferred ways of caring for a child. He was to be boarded out unless this was not practicable or desirable for the time being. Circular 164/48 said, in paragraph 23, that boarding out "had been placed first, as being generally the most satisfactory method of providing a substitute home". Rule 4 of the Children and Young Persons (Boarding Out) Rules, made in 1946, required that any child committed to a local

authority's care as a fit person was to be boarded out as soon as possible and that when, within three months of the committal, the child had not been boarded out, application was to be made to the Home Secretary for his consent to alternative arrangements. Paragraph 28 of the circular said:

"While it is intended that there should be a large expansion of boarding out, it is recognised that this will be a gradual process and that it will not be possible in the immediate future for local authorities to board out within three months from their coming into care under Section 1, large numbers of the children to whom the rules will apply as from the 5th July 1946 ... it is therefore intended to modify Rule 4 before the expiration of six months from the commencement of the Act. Local authorities have a duty, however ... to provide accommodation and maintenance for a child in their care (whether under Section 1 or under a fit person order) by boarding him out unless that course is not practicable or desirable for the time being. Paragraph 29 drew attention to the provision that, in boarding out a local authority should select if possible foster parents of the same religious persuasion, or those who undertook to bring him up in his own persuasion and express the Home Secretary's hope that there would be compliance with the spirit of the law."

In the hierarchy of preferences set out in Section 13, next after boarding out came accommodation in a home provided by a local authority and, after that, a registered voluntary home. The authority could also make use of "any accommodation which was available for children in the care of their own parents". Examples of this which come to mind are any kind of group residential care for the purpose of education or training. This provision could justify for allowing a child to be, for the time being, in the care and possession of his own parents, although that raised a doubt whether a child at the same time continued in the care of the authority. This doubt was not resolved in the Children and Young Persons Act of 1969. The local authority could not, without the Home Secretary's approval, use a remand home for the care of a child except for a child whose case in court had not been finally settled. The Home Secretary sometimes gave permission for a child who had been committed to the care of an authority to remain in a remand home while long term care was being sought.

Only rarely was permission given for a child to be cared for temporarily in a remand home unless court proceedings were pending. Paragraphs 34 and 35 of the circular referred to Sections 19 and 20 of the 1948 Act relating to those children who would have to rely on the authority not only during childhood but to give them a start in life as a good parent should. It could not be assumed that a child going out of care at 18 would be fully independent. Authorities might therefore, with the Home Secretary's consent, provide residential hostels for young people over compulsory school age, until the age of 21, for any youngster who had, on reaching school leaving age or thereafter, been in care. It was a requirement that the hostel should be "near the place where they may be employed or seeking employment or receiving educational training". An additional provision was that young people who had not been in care might also be accommodated in the same hostel, " ... the purpose being to avoid segregating those who are, or have been, in care, from other young people". No reference was traced anywhere in the inspectors' reports to any young person who had not been in care ever being accommodated in one of these hostels.

12.15 SHORT STAY BOARDING OUT

There was insufficient evidence in the inspectors' reports to attach a grade to the performance of many authorities in the practice of short-stay boarding out, although it was mentioned many times in the reports. The rationale for short-stay boarding out is less clear than that for long-term care. It may have been largely pragmatic. The following may be argued in its favour:

- 1 It reduced pressure on nurseries which might be overfull or understaffed. In the long term it introduced capital expenditure on residential group care.
- 2 It reduced the risk of cross-infection like gastroenteritis and other disorders which plagued the residential nurseries of the 1950s. For example, the County Medical Officer of Health for Devon complained that Sonne Dysentery, from which the county had been free, had been

introduced in Devon's residential nurseries by imports from the London County Council.

- 3 It was a source of recruitment for foster parents, some of whom proved suitable for long-stay or for adoptive homes. On the whole, however, the cadre of short-stay foster mothers were a different constituency from long-stay. They were generally women with a special interest in looking after a succession of small children. Often retired nurses or middle-aged women who had successfully brought up a family. The foster father did not figure so largely as in long-stay boarding out and both foster parents approached the task on the assumption that the children would soon return to their natural families or go to an adoptive home. There were, of course, many instances in which short-stay foster parents got attached to their children and were sad to see them go. Frequently there was an older daughter of the foster mother still living in the household or nearby and taking an interest. Some, who became child care officers, said that their interest was first aroused because their mothers took in short-stay foster children.
- 4 The practice of short-stay fostering, somehow enlivened the professional practice of a department. Relationships with these foster mothers and the task of investigating, placing and supporting and subsequently restoring the short-stay child to his own parents was an important and pleasing aspect of life in a children's department: source exchange of information and gossip.
- 5 There seems to have been less risk of the ostensibly short-stay child lingering on in care and becoming one of the 7,000 'Children Who Wait'. When a natural parent's child was placed in a short-stay foster home it was good practice to introduce the natural parents to the short-stay foster family and to encourage them to visit. If the mother were in hospital the foster mother might take the child see his own mother or might exchange correspondence and telephone messages. The whole process was imbued with the expectation that the child would return to his own family immediately the crisis had passed. If a child went into a residential nursery the natural parents knew he was in a group which included long-stay children. If there were complications at home caused, for example, by a marital disharmony, poor housing or poverty, the temptation was to leave the child in the nursery, if only for a bit longer. The folk wisdom was that a child was 'safe' in an institution, where the staff were public employees.

It was notable that authorities where the inspectors reported favourably upon the quality of the child care officers tended to make more use of foster homes for long and short stays. A special study of short-stay boarding out was made by the inspectors in authority 028 with over a thousand children in care. They reported that:

"Child care officers could decide whether or not to receive into care and then they are required to try to board the child out immediately. The majority of short-stay children went directly to foster homes. The authority's home help service reduced considerably the number of short-stay applications and those not eligible for home helps were usually single children. Every child care officer seemed to have a reserve of foster homes for emergencies and short-stay admissions. One child care officer could not remember when she had last placed a short-stay child into a nursery."

The City of Manchester Children's Committee, in its published report, said that more children were received into care during 1962/3 than in any previous year ²⁸⁴. With about the same number of children boarded out there were 76 more children in group residential care than in the previous year although most children received for short-stays went direct to foster homes:

"Manchester is extremely lucky in having such hardworking foster parents who receive children into their homes at any hour of the day (or sometimes at night) perhaps at very short notice. Often the child arrives dirty, ill-clad and hungry and, because of the shortage of foster parents, children are often placed in foster homes within a very short time of the previous children ... being discharged from care."

12.16 LESSONS FROM THE SINGLE CASE STUDY OF THE CURTIS BROTHERS

The single case study of the Curtis Family, in the Appendix, gives examples of the superficial manner in which some child care staff addressed themselves to the children's needs (and, indeed, to those of the foster parents) in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. In 1967 inspectors, commenting on the work of this large authority, said that there was no attempt to include information about the foster home in a child's case paper. Records relating to foster parents were 'loosely tucked or pinned alphabetically in box files'. Many foster homes were selected after one visit and a report of two or three lines, sometimes 'with a view to adoption'. Adverse comments on foster parents were not recorded: Miss Moss, the Area Officer, said that " ... foster parents were valued helpers" and she did not want a clerk or an office cleaner to see any criticisms of them.

12.17 RESTRICTIONS ON BOARDING OUT

The report on the organisation and methods of the children's department presented to the London County Council Establishment Committee on 27 October 1955 said, in paragraphs 121 and 122, that the number of children 'suitable and available for boarding out' was much less than the number which were 'suitable but not yet boarded-out'. This was because of the high proportion of 'institutionalised' children and the 2,500 Roman Catholics. The authors of the report thought it was probably a mistake for policy to be expressed in terms of limitation. For example the committee's general policy was not to board a child out against his parents' wishes. This policy decision was, in fact, qualified by another decision, "that the officers had discretion to board a child out against his parents' wishes if to do so was considered to be in the child's interests". The authors of the report commented, "in practice this has led to more emphasis being placed on the limitation than on the exercise of discretion". The London County Council said that their decision not to board out against the parents' wishes were for 'child care reasons' which meant, presumably, that it was not in the interests of a child's welfare to be boarded out if the parents did not consent. Similarly, in Gloucestershire County Council's Children's Officer's Report for 1958, if a mother "... would prefer her child to go to a County Home or Nursery rather than a foster home, her wishes are respected". Others around that time were emphasising to applicants that their children were likely to be boarded out and claimed that some parents then discovered that they were not in need of the department's services after all.

12.18 CHANGING ATTITUDES AMONG FOSTER PARENTS

By the later nineteen-fifties, a change had been achieved in the attitude of potential foster parents. People contemplating fostering had previously not

generally been willing to receive visits from parents and to envisage the child's return home. A radio broadcast on the topic allowed to pass, without comment, a foster parent's remark that she had asked the council for children " ... if possible with no parents". The idea of 'fostering with a view to adoption' and its corollary of a boarding-out allowance, coupled with the hope that the parents would never reappear, was just beginning to fade. In Cornwall, before 1948, it was taken for granted that parents of children committed by the court to the council's care should not expect to see them again, at least until they were eighteenⁿ.

12.19 CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF 'RESIDENTIAL' WORK

During the decade after 1948 there were changes in the way that children were looked after in groups away from home. First, came the entire eradication of nurseries within workhouses. Sub-Sections 13(2) and 13(3) of the Children Act obliged local authorities to seek the Home Secretary's approval for continuing use of these nurseries. They were all closed after a year or two. Not only workhouses, but other large institutional buildings housing up to fifty or more children, were taken over from the public assistance committees. Along with these, some 120 approved schools, many of them built for the purpose in the nineteenth century, continued under separate management, with varying degrees of modification until their conversion into Community Homes with Education under the Children & Young Persons Act 1969. The large home tended to be superseded by the Curtis panacea: the so-called 'family group home' for six to twelve children. Many authorities, like Manchester, went in for a programme of 'family group homes' on housing estates. These 'family group homes' barely offered adequate scope for people who had taken the trouble to study successfully for a residential child care certificate. Often the people in charge of these homes

were married, with the husband pursuing his normal employment. These posts were, at first sight, attractive to couples who already had children of their own and who could not contemplate one or both going away for fourteen months' full-time training. Often there was provision for an assistant housemother to the couple in charge. Such a post was hardly attractive to a young person who had taken a full-time training. The population of children in the remaining large home became less stable. There was more coming and going, more use of homes as a 'place of safety', more admission to safeguard children over a family crisis, more restoration of children to parental care and more boarding-out. All these factors made 'residential' work a less than attractive prospect. Not only the buildings and the child population were changing during the twenty-three years. Less emphasis was placed upon the mechanics of running a household and more upon the professional role, calling for sensitivity to the individual needs and expectations, not only of children but also of their parents and families.

12.20 PERFORMANCE OF AUTHORITIES IN BOARDING OUT

TABLE 12.20
Twelve Largest Authorities' Boarding Out Performance
England

Grade	Performance of Authority	Number of Authorities
1	very Good	1
2	Good	1
3	Satisfactory	4
4	Below Satisfactory	6

Extracts from the inspectors' reports on each of the twelve authorities graded above:

Grade 1 : A 'Very Good' Authority

The committee of Authority 029 was determined to expand boarding out. A nursery matron and a reception home warden addressed residential staff on 'preparation for boarding out'. Boarded out were 65%, compared with about 45% eight years earlier. Generous extra allowances and retaining fees were offered for exceptional fostering tasks, recognising 'the element of reward'. Inspectors advised "tempering enthusiasm with a little caution".

Grade 2 : A 'Good' Authority

Intensive drives were made in Authority 028, where 250 houses were visited on an estate and six foster homes found. There had been steady progress in ten years and there could have been more if the child care officer who admitted a child could retain responsibility. Those firmly determined to retain such responsibility often found suitable foster homes.

Grade 3 : Four 'Satisfactory' Authorities

The proportion boarded out by Authority 017 was continuing to rise, while it had levelled-out nationally, although the committee had put an embargo on boarding out from small homes.

Most child care officers in Authority 018 strongly favoured boarding out and accepted splitting brothers and sisters as inevitable. By 1958 the proportion boarded out was steady at 60%.

Authority 036 had difficulty in finding long stay foster homes for black children but none in finding short stays for them. In one year, 800 children had been placed directly into foster homes but only fifty from group residential care. One area officer seemed to feel hopeless about boarding out and to think there was little wrong with group care. By contrast another area had a high proportion boarded out.

Monthly staff meetings in Authority 050 were mainly focussed on boarding out. The Home Office commended the progress in boarding out but wanted improved supervision of it. The reply from the authority said they were satisfied with their arrangements and saw no need for discussion with the Home Office. No foster parents' meetings are held, but they got together locally, informally.

Grade 4 : Six 'Below Satisfactory' Authorities

In the early years Authority 034 did not board out a child if a parent objected. After ten years the parents were no longer asked and the committee resolved that no child, " ... who needs boarding out and is suitable and available for boarding out should be placed, or remain in, a residential establishment". However, if a parent's objection was "considered to be genuine rather than obstructive" then the child would not be boarded out. Inspectors said many children were left in homes indefinitely with a vague hope of rehabilitation. One area was said to have discontinued meetings to discuss children needing foster homes because "there was no room large enough for the staff to meet in". There had been confusing directives about restrictions on boarding out Roman Catholic children. Many weeks

could elapse before a child care officer visited a couple offering to foster. "Generally the quality of boarding out is good". The extremely low proportion boarded out was attributed to poor organisation and staffing.

Inspectors were satisfied with permanent holiday foster homes found for boarding school children in the care of Authority 053. Otherwise they were generally critical of the arrangements for boarding out and disappointed at the results.

The children's officer of Authority 062 did not seem to encourage boarding out. S/he produced statistics and graphs to show that performance was better than it looked. Few child care officers had the use of cars. A slight increase of numbers in foster homes had not kept pace with increasing numbers in care.

Very few foster homes were being sought and found in Authority 067. Child care officers worked so hard on investigating applications for reception into care that they could not attend properly to boarding out.

Inspectors said that the committee of Authority 105 had a dogmatic and inflexible attitude. Placing brothers and sisters separately and boarding out any child from a 'family group home' required special sanction. Placings were delayed to await approval at a committee meeting. Little use was made of lists made by child care officers of children needing foster homes. Nurseries were kept filled to the prejudice of boarding out.

Inspectors were pleased with the improved quality of boarding out by Authority 106, but the quantity had diminished for lack of enough staff.

12.21 SUPPOSED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF MODE OF CARE

There was a school of thought resistant to the reduction of group residential care. Simplistic financial arguments were advanced for and against. High unit costs in under-occupied establishments meant that directly opposing arguments were sometimes being voiced simultaneously, for example " ... we must get the children out of this expensive place", (valid only if another local authority or voluntary society was liable for the overheads). Alternatively, " ... we must keep the place full to keep down the unit cost". The inspectors often reported pressure to keep the numbers up. Here are four examples:

On 1 September 1959 the inspector met the children's officer for Authority 028, who said " ... the chairman is eager to put more children, not less, into the homes".

In 1958, the children's officer of Authority 095 was described as having a defeatist attitude to short-stay boarding out. Still, in 1964, it was reported that occupation in the residential nurseries was deliberately kept high.

In 1959, the children's committee of Authority 134 objected to vacancies in the nurseries, so short-stay boarding out was not developed.

Inspectors said in 1959, that Authority 136 discouraged short-stay boarding out as the committee wanted to keep the nursery full.

It is true, and has certainly not been disproved, that an authority which favoured boarding out and restricted its group residential provision, spent less money than one which did not. But during the whole of the 23 years, no serious economic study was made of the issue. Not till the publication in the mid-nineteen-eighties of the Personal Social Services Unit, University of Kent, was the issue tackled. Dr Martin Knapp, Senior Research Fellow, said, in a personal communication, "I have found it very difficult indeed to reach a conclusion on the relative costs of boarding out and residential care". Knapp's researches came long after the end of children's departments and study of his conclusions must be left to others, but his broad conclusions were:

- a For some services and some children, the hidden costs are far greater than the obvious costs.
- b Crude comparisons take no account of the 'difficulties' displayed by children remaining in group care.
- c Costs cannot be separated from 'outcomes', the effect on the child, the carers, the family and the community of the care provided.
- d Crude costs provide only a 'snapshot'. They do not measure the total expense of a childhood in and out of care.

12.22 HOW THE LAW ON DENOMINATIONAL UPBRINGING COULD AFFECT FOSTER CARE

Six members of the Curtis Committee published a note of reservation:

"Where the denomination is ascertainable as being Anglican, Roman Catholic or Free Church, a child shall not be boarded out or remain boarded out with a foster parent of a religious creed different from the child."

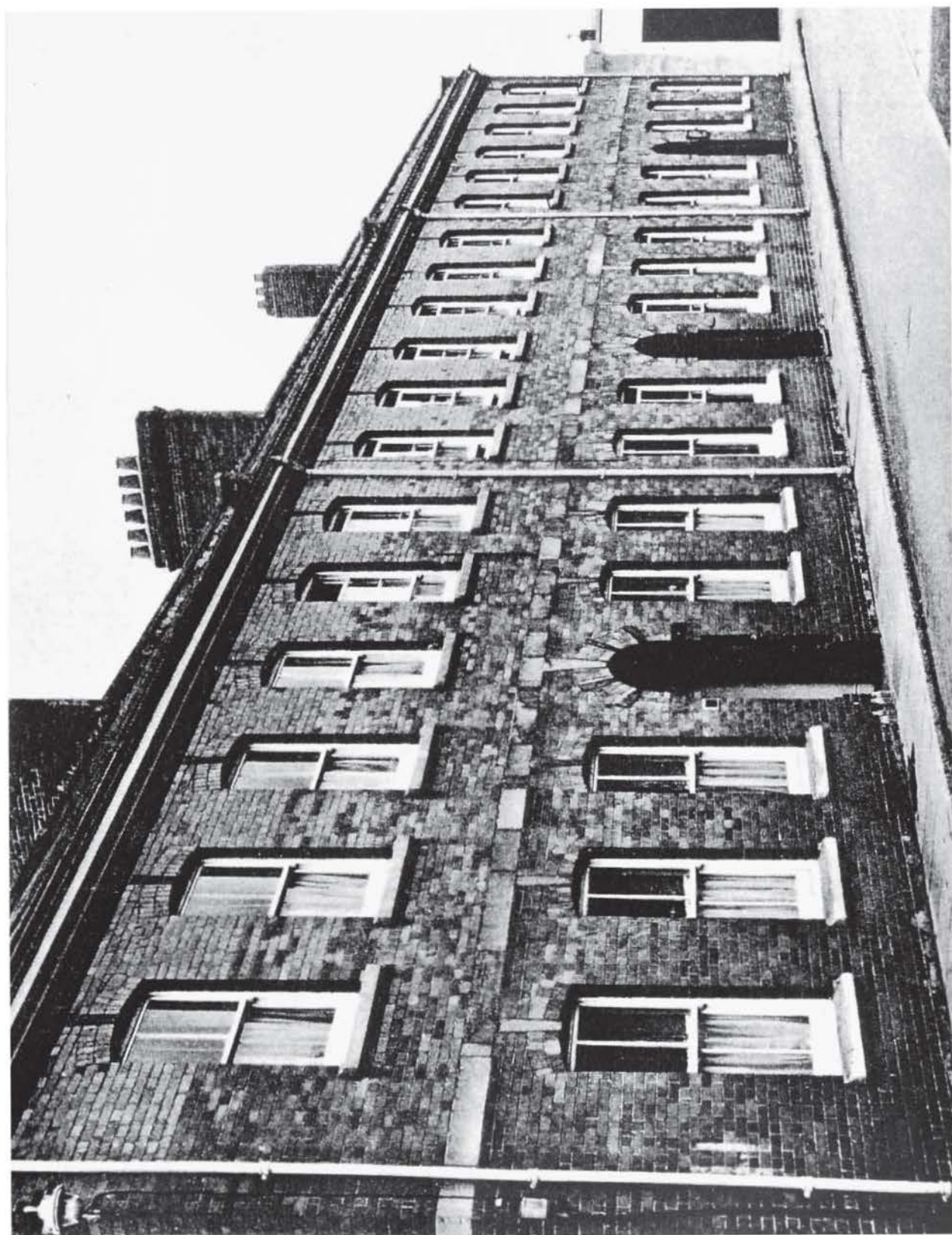
In 1956, a brother and sister, aged four and five, had been committed to the care of authority 109 when their mother was convicted of keeping a disorderly house. The father was dead. They were placed for three weeks in two separate Roman Catholic voluntary homes and then boarded out together with a married couple who attended the Roman Catholic Church with the foster children. This couple had formerly fostered another child satisfactorily and all the investigations and references were satisfactory. The Roman Catholic authorities discovered that the foster mother had been married and divorced seven years earlier, after which she had married her current husband, the foster father, in a registry office. The Roman Catholic authorities requested the removal of the children from this foster home on the grounds that the foster parents were 'not married in the church's eyes and that the children were not therefore being brought up in a proper Roman Catholic atmosphere'. The children's officer, supported by the chief executive, recommended that the children should remain in their foster home. The children's committee, by eight votes to five, decided that the children should be removed. This was raised with the whole council which debated the issue and decided by 48 votes to 11 that the children should remain in their foster home.

12.23 A RADICAL ALTERNATIVE

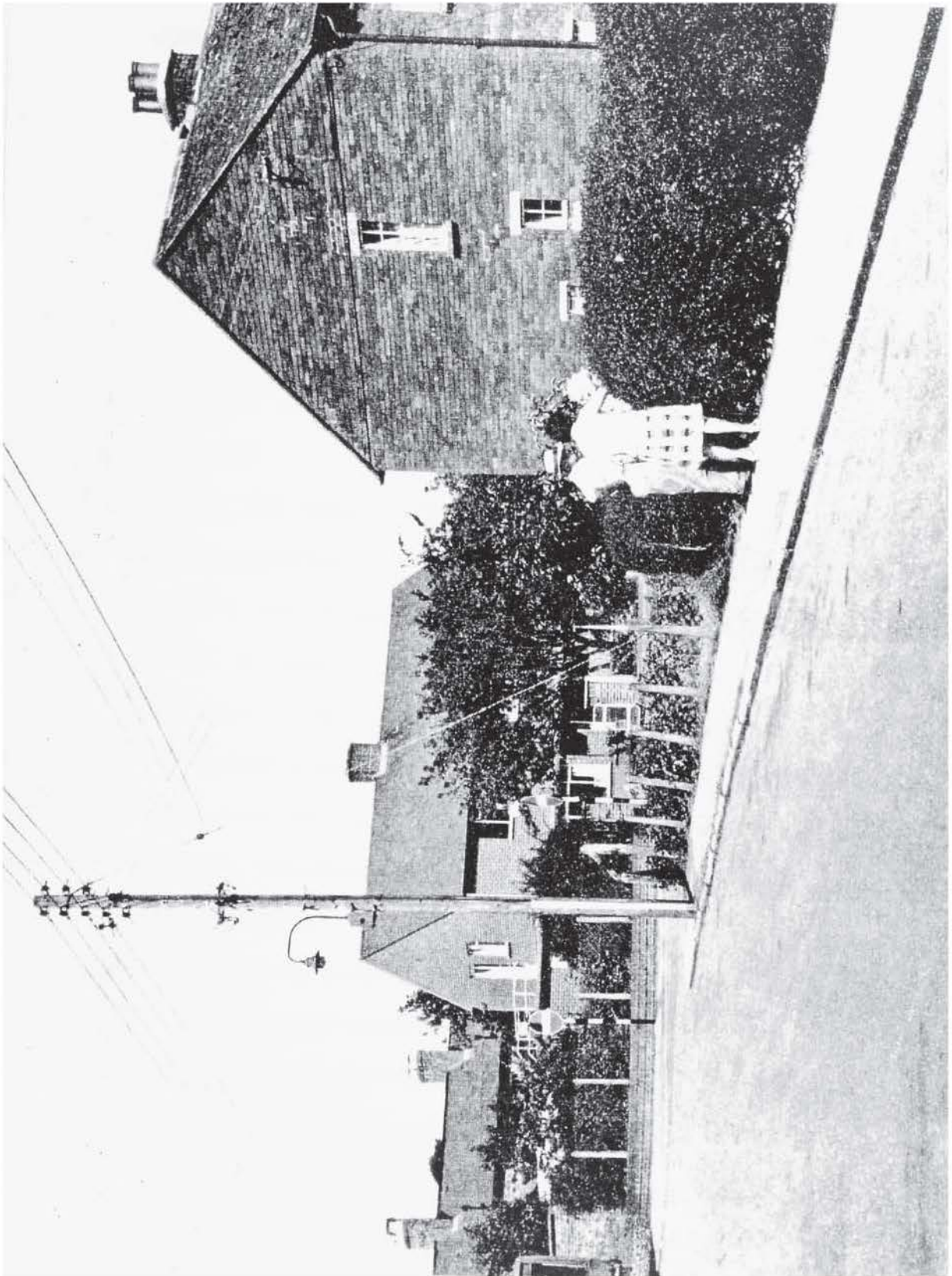
The following proposals seemed to present a new idea. During the lifetime of children's departments the relative merits of residential group care and fostering were argued emotively and little was heard of the alternative collectivist ideology, characterised for example by the Israeli Kibbutzim. Gillian Dalley wrote about it in 1988, in 'Social Work Today', and noted that social workers

tended to feel that the community was the embodiment of all that was good and was supposed to avoid especially the evils of institutionalisation⁰⁹⁰. Feminists argued that the ideal of family-based care resulted from modern western society's attachment to a family ideology whose possessive individualism was the basis of modern capitalist society, subordinating women, splitting the public from the private domain and reinforcing male domination in the public sphere. It cherished the introverted nuclear family with man as the breadwinner and woman as the carer. Dr Dalley put this as apposition to the proposition that an individual's freedom was only acceptable so far as it did not impinge on that of others. She saw collectivism as a reciprocal and all-embracing concept for fellow members of society. Applied in the field of caring, collectivism required society to take responsibility for all its citizens. We saw this principle applied in the health and welfare services and by their predecessors under the poor law. Feminists want to see the collective principle applied in the health and welfare services and by their predecessors under the poor law. Feminists want to see the collective principle penetrating more deeply into the private domain too. They expect that this could end the separation between public and private care and, in the process, end the unequal position of women: society taking responsibility for what was at present mainly the private responsibility of women as carers. This challenges some of the fundamental assumptions of present day society and opens the way to reassess some current patterns of family and caring. Collectivism at best can inspire society to offer succour and protection to its weaker members without stigmatising them: it offers care without dependence on the self-sacrifice of individual carers which privatised, informal caring so often involves. A collective framework would ensure that those who care and those who were cared for were part of a network of reciprocal relationships, binding them socially together; the one no more disadvantaged than the other. Care work

would be valued and well paid. A group home or a children's home should be seen as an attempt at community living, not as second best to a nuclear family. Dr Dalley cites a couple of spin-offs, further emphasising the advantages of collective care. Children should be encouraged to enter the public domain from an early age since this participation benefits them in a group. Secondly, the more that children are known publicly the better chance they have of being protected from abuse which "tends to take place in a claustrophobic or introverted nuclear family life". These arguments must be taken seriously and given such weight as the decision-makers consider justified. They do not seem to take account of the advantage that some foster children make life-long bonds with their foster families: a feature which can hardly be claimed for collective care. But maybe these ideas have long formed the background for those who seem to favour the infinite continuation of collective care.



FAMILY GROUP HOMES
Barnstaple 1898



FAMILY GROUP HOME
Tiverton 1964

C H A P T E R T H I R T E E N

ADEQUACY OF PROVISION OF FIELD STAFF

"An authority cannot break out of a position of shortage of candidates for child care officer vacancies without first settling a generous establishment and creating for itself an image of a 'child care conscious' authority."

Government Social Survey 1968
'Lessons of the London Government Reforms'

13. 1 INTRODUCTION

The central argument of this thesis, reiterated implicitly or explicitly in almost every chapter, is that the quality of service provided by children's departments was directly related to the number of skilled social workers deployed in preventing deprivation of family care and, where necessary, in providing substitutes for family care. The Curtis Committee, in paragraph 474, estimated that one boarding out visitor could be responsible for the supervision of between 100 and 150 children " ... on the basis of visiting at least once in three months". They recognised that more frequent visits would, of course, be necessary when there was any cause for anxiety. Caseloads would include those placed privately by their parents for reward and those awaiting adoption. Did it cross their minds that much of the visitors' time would be devoted to investigating for reception into care and in applying measures to diminish the need for such reception? Nevertheless these duties, together with the duty to seek restoration to the family, began from the first day upon which the act came into force.

13. 2 THE LAW'S REQUIREMENT

Sub Section 41(5) of the Children Act 1948 read:

"A local authority shall secure the provision of adequate staff for assisting the children's officer in the exercise of his functions."

Home Office circular 160/48 dated 8 July 1948, introducing the Children Act said, in paragraph 56:

"Local authorities are required to appoint an adequate staff to assist the children's officer. In addition to the necessary field staff, local authorities are asked to see that adequate clerical assistance is provided so that the children's officer may be free to devote as much time as possible to outside work and to maintain contact with the children."

In some authorities the paramount importance of social work in child care was recognised from the outset. Information about numbers of child care officers appointed in the first years of the children's service is not generally available. However, the published report of the first year in Dudley describes how Miss Langridge worked single-handed for several months until the authority tripled the field staff by appointing two child care officers. In a personal communication Miss Langridge said that both were qualified. In the County Borough of Croydon, in the two years from July 1948 to July 1950, the number of child care officers was increased from two to six, all four of the newly-appointed being qualified. This awareness of the value of social work was matched elsewhere. For example, in Somerset, when the children's officer asked for additional annual leave for child care officers because of the stresses the committee declined, but spontaneously recommended an increase in the number of child care officers^o. To sell the case for staff increases on this scale to children's committees and then to staff committees and the chief executives and other fellow chief officers demanded singleness of purpose in the face of natural resistance to what looked like empire building. Logically councillors asked, "Why do you want more staff to care for children who were being looked after adequately before the new act?" Had they not asked they would have been in dereliction of their duty. It was for the new children's officers to make the case, not necessarily for more

resources but for a radically different distribution of resources. The superintending inspector for the London region afforded crucial help by interviewing chief executives and the chairs of establishment committees, one of whom was heard to grumble that the intervention was "probably inspired", meaning that the children's officer had asked the inspector to intervene. Miss Langridge's report shows that the way to convince committees of the value of social work was by personal, practical demonstration. In 1956, a small authority, number 121, had two child care officers each with a caseload numbering about forty, including approved school after-care, adoption supervision and child protection. Inspectors reported that they found these caseloads quite manageable and only occasionally had to work in the evenings. However, there was no routine for regular reviews.

13. 3 TROUBLE IN THE NORTH

A striking analysis of the difficulties which some committees experienced in recruiting field workers was made by the inspectorate's reporting, in 1956, on a medium sized authority, number 101, in the northern half of England. The post of senior social worker had been vacant for ten months. It had been advertised thirty-four times in local and national newspapers, including 'The Times' and 'The Lady'. The vacancy had been sent to ten universities and the children's officer had asked colleagues to recommend suitable child care officers to apply for this senior post. No suitable person had applied. The latest advertisement had attracted three applicants, none with experience in a children's department. The inspector said that practically all the women staff had changed during the previous nine months. Five had moved for family reasons. The inspector said that caseloads were not heavy, officers were not under undue strain, the children's officer was pleasant and affable with a good knowledge of the

children. S/he was a very able administrator in good standing with the committee. There was a waiting list of good applicants for posts in charge of family group homes. The office accommodation was good, there was a good spirit in the department, the administrative, field and residential staff working well together. The authority paid good salaries and conditions of work were excellent. The inspector concluded:

"This illustrates the kind of changes that can go on in northern authorities. I understand it is very difficult indeed to attract qualified women here unless they have some personal reason for coming. They seem to prefer to go to south country places."

The inspector supposed that an important factor was that the children's officer was known to have had no social work training. The well-qualified assistant children's officer in charge of casework gave lip service to modern ideas (such as key workers), but readily conformed to the existing framework which was 'based on administrative convenience and tidiness at the expense of quality and sensitivity of casework'.

13. 4 SOCIAL WORK PHILOSOPHY

Those authorities who had not, at first, appreciated the significance of social work in child care, received some stimulus from interest aroused by Dr John Bowlby to the Association of Children's Officers' conference in 1951. Another incentive came from Section 1 of the Children & Young Persons Act 1963 which extended the powers and duties of local authorities to promote the welfare of children by diminishing the need for them to be received into care or to be brought before a court. The rationale of the new act was summed up in paragraph 3 of Home Office circular 204/69, introducing Section 1 of the new act. The Secretary of State was:

" ... confident that the effect required to achieve progress will be repaid by the saving in suffering and insecurity to the children

themselves, by the saving to the community in crime and maladjustment among its future citizens and by saving in the cost of the child care service itself".

The order in which the Secretary of State placed these three objectives is beyond criticism:

- 1 prevention of suffering and insecurity to the children
- 2 saving to the community in crime and maladjustment among its future citizens
- 3 saving in the cost of child care service

It is a pity that some generally wise and responsible people chose to lampoon the intentions of preventive work by commenting that the cheapest child care was to be attained by not receiving the child into care. Paragraph 8 of circular 204 read:

"Limitation of the New Powers. The section does not give power to intervene in family difficulties or domestic problems unless there is some reason to suppose that these may create a risk of children having to be received into, or committed to the care of, a local authority. Nor does it give power in any circumstances to impose guidance on parents who are not willing to receive it."

Those who drafted the circular were intent on withholding a blank cheque to any authority which wanted to engage preventive workers and let them loose with a roving commission in ghettos of deprivation.

13. 5 REPORT ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE 1963 ACT

Home Office circular 102/65 of 7 May 1965 accompanied a memorandum by the Home Office headed, 'Reports of local authorities for the period 3.10.63 to 31.7.64'. This document reported a wide variety of activities by child care officers and of arrangements made by local authorities under Section 1. The Home Office recognised, for the first time, that a concomitant of the new act was an increase in field staff. This increase was one of five measures which the Home Office singled out as steps in the development of preventive services. As early as 1962

a medium sized authority, number 042, in the Midlands with about 550 children in care had, in addition to the children's officer and deputy, an assistant children's officer in charge of fieldwork, three area children's officers and twenty-one child care officers - that is one field officer to every twenty-two children in care. On the other hand, in 1967 in medium-sized authority number 175, the average caseload would have been 90 were it not that the children's officer, the deputy and the assistant children's officer each supervised about 25 children and area children's officers and senior child care officers also carried caseloads. This reduced the average caseload to about 80. Staff could only do this properly by working long hours. Inspectors calculated that the average overtime for each officer was 58 hours in twelve weeks: just under five hours a week which was unlikely to be spread evenly. The establishment committee had agreed to increase the number of child care officers.

13. 6 THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS ACT 1969

By 1969 there was a new hand on the helm of the Home Office inspectorate. Miss Joan Cooper, the new chief inspector, had been a county children's officer for seventeen years and she knew the difficulties facing children's committees and officers in getting adequate field staff. In consequence, on 8 September 1969, even before the new measure had received the Royal Assent, she arranged for enquiry to be directed to each authority asking for estimates, under each of seven headings, of how many additional child care officer posts would be required to implement the act. In fact, implementation of the 1969 act did not seem to require as many posts as had the 1963 act. One of Miss Cooper's seven questions asked, for example, for an estimate of the number of children under ten years old whose supervision was required to be transferred from the probation to the children's service under Clauses 7 and 9 of the bill and how

many additional child care officers would be required for this purpose. It seems likely that only a fraction of one child care officer could have been estimated as needed for this purpose except in four or five of the very largest authorities. Nevertheless authorities had to ensure that children's officers had to match the number of established posts for social workers to the perceived need.

13. 7 THE HOME OFFICE ATTITUDE IN 1957

An unusual intervention by the inspectorate prevented a medium sized authority, number 118, from appointing one extra child care officer in 1957. The inspectors had already recorded their opinion that the authority had a very well-informed and effective children's committee and an exceptionally competent children's officer. In March 1957, the children's officer showed the inspector a report which s/he had prepared for the committee for the closing of an out-of-date children's home, the occupation of which had dropped in four years from sixteen to eight. In the same period the number of children boarded out had increased from 30 to 80. The use of short-stay foster homes had been developed and in the last year 49 children had been so placed. The children's officer proposed closure of the large home, currently costing £5,600 a year to run, and the opening of a smaller home, expected to cost £2,600 annually. The net capital cost of establishing and fitting out the new home was estimated to be £1,600 after deducting the estimated proceeds of the sale of the old one. The children's officer assumed that by boarding out an average of five more short stay children at any one time the need for the large old home could be obviated, provided one additional child care officer was appointed to find and serve the additional foster homes. The authority's finance department submitted the following estimates (which are reproduced here in round figures):

TABLE 13.7

Proposed Saving by Closing One Home and Opening Another
May 1957

Annual Cost of Maintaining Large Old Home		Annual Cost of Proposed Smaller Home with one new Child Care Officer using Short Stay Foster Homes	
	£		£
Staff Salaries	3,000	Staff Salaries	800
Other Expenses	2,000	Other Expenses	1,600
Loan Charges	600	Loan Charges	200
Total for Home	5,600	Total for Home	2,600
		Salary of Extra Child Care Officer	800
		Five Boarding Out Allowances	600
Total Annual Cost	5,600	Total Annual Cost	4,000
GROSS ANNUAL SAVING		£1,600	
NETT ANNUAL SAVING TO COUNCIL AFTER DEDUCTION OF 50% GRANT		£800	

On 9 May 1957, the inspector took the figures back to the regional superintending inspector. On 2 June 1957 the superintending inspector sent copies to the deputy chief inspector. The superintending inspector commented:

"Certainly the out-of-date home is costly and ineffective and should be closed. It does not necessarily follow that the opening of a new, smaller home and the appointment of an additional child care officer is a prerequisite. At present, in addition to the children's officer, the authority has three child care officers to serve 140 children in care and another 70 children being supervised. They do a lot of prevention and rehabilitation and preparation for boarding out is thorough, but the present staff cannot be said to be overloaded. The field staff is rarely up to strength. When the effectiveness of a full and stable staff has been tested it may be possible to save considerably more than £800 by the closure of the old home. Increased efforts in the field by a full staff could surely obviate the need for an

additional home. If the authority submits these proposals officially I should welcome a chance to comment in detail but they may appoint an extra child care officer and there seems little we can do."

On 7 June 1957, the deputy chief inspector commented:

" ... there are prima facie grounds for caution before officially encouraging the council to add to their professional staff. Presumably, however, the Authority is not bound to consult us."

Meanwhile, on 27 May 1957, the council's chief executive wrote formally to the Under Secretary of State:

"My Council have given consideration to reception and short-stay provision ... At present (the old home) is, with your consent, used for the reception of all ages of children ... A scheme was recently approved by the Council to replace its use ... by the purchase of two standard council houses and ... the appointment of a further Child Care Officer ... the Committee had in mind firstly the desirability of providing a more intimate and homely environment for the children ... also ... the cost of the alternative scheme would make some financial saving possible. The addition of a Child Care Officer will make possible the further development of short-stay boarding out, and this appointment is held to be essential ... I am instructed to seek approval in principle ... "

On 16 June 1957, the Under Secretary of State replied to the chief executive:

"While the Secretary of State welcomes the development of more individual provision for children he thinks before giving approval in principle, it would be helpful ... if the proposals could be further discussed, at a meeting between representatives of the Children's Committee and the Regional Superintending Inspector."

On 6 July 1957, the superintending inspector met the children's committee and subsequently reported:

"Asked by the Chairman to open, I drew attention to the urgent need for economy and expressed appreciation that their proposal had this in mind, as well as the promotion of good child care. Nevertheless we wondered if these ends were best achieved in the way proposed. One of their existing long-stay homes for eight children could be adapted for short-stay and reception and the long-stay cases could then be accommodated otherwise ... efforts might be made to board out or rehabilitate some of the children there as they now had a complete establishment of three child care officers for the first time in two-and-a-half years ... We, therefore, counselled caution in regard to the proposed additional child care officer. In reply, and to our surprise, the children's officer said that their short-stay reception needs could not be

placed as low as eight places. There were eleven children in the old home at present and there had been as many and more so far this year ... s/he admitted their lack of experience of a full child care officer staff over a period, but with students they had been numerically up to strength. S/he said concern was expressed by the Association of Child Care Officers at the long hours they were being asked to work. S/he stressed the amount of preventive work they were doing and quoted their rate per thousand child population in care. In view of the conflict we emphasised the need for a clearer appreciation of the needs in terms of residential accommodation ... Their child care officer establishment appeared quite adequate comparatively ... The gross caseload of 189 gave the children's officer and three child care officers an average caseload of 47½. We reminded them that prevention from admission to care needed careful qualification as a criterion of good field work. At least two members said the committee had not been unanimous in agreement to the proposals, and expressed appreciation of another point of view. I made it clear that our interest was to offer helpful observations ... and that the committee was solely responsible for making a decision, both on staffing and on residential provision, although in the latter case we were concerned on capital investment grounds. It is a pity that the children's officer did not ask our advice before putting this plan to the Children's Committee ... before it was forced through the Council. The Chairman thanked us and said the Committee would reconsider ... "

On 20 August 1957, the chief executive wrote to the Under Secretary of State referring to the superintending inspector's meeting with the committee:

" ... after reaffirming their original decision the council decided to apply to the Secretary of State for the establishment of an additional post and one family group home for four immediately. He asked for the Under Secretary of State's view before making formal application."

On 13 September 1957, the Under Secretary of State replied that the Secretary of State was prepared to approve immediately the proposals for residential provision but he thought the present establishment of field staff was sufficient and suggested that the appointment of one more should be deferred until there was more experience to draw upon. On 18 October 1957, the inspector visited the children's officer and learned that the committee had decided to retain the old home after all, as they feared that the alternative proposal would be insufficient without the appointment of an additional child care officer. On 19 December 1957, the chief executive wrote to the Under Secretary of State:

"As a result of the views conveyed to the committee by the Superintending Inspector of 18 July and of the observations in your letter, the policy which the committee were proposing will not be proceeded with."

It appears that at this stage in the development of the child care services, nine years after the implementation of the Children Act, this superintending inspector, supported by the deputy chief inspector and by the Under Secretary of State, interpreted his function as dissuading a well-managed authority from expanding their field staff in accordance with carefully costed plans. They thought that average caseloads of 47, plus investigation of applications for reception into care and other preventive work, was reasonable in spite of knowing that the child care officers were working longer hours than was required by their conditions of service. It is difficult to comment dispassionately upon the performance of the Home Office in this region. Nine years after implementation of the Children Act this region's superintending inspector, the deputy chief inspector and the Under Secretary of State used their influence to:

- 1 discourage a well managed authority from expanding their field staff in accordance with a carefully costed plan
- 2 present a calculation showing an average caseload of 47 without mentioning time spent on investigating applications for reception into care and other preventive work, which they acknowledged was well done
- 3 include the children's officer in calculating the average caseload
- 4 present the assumption that students, rather than taking up the time of their supervisors, could bring the department 'numerically up to strength'
- 5 overlook the possibility that repeated vacancies in a department which otherwise had a good reputation and high morale was an indicator of overwork in a department inadequately staffed to cover holidays, sickness and gaps between appointments

Whatever may have been the motives of these four officials, their intervention was disastrous. This affair has been analysed in some detail because it is out of character with the performance of the inspectorate and of the Home Office

generally. In the examination of hundreds of files, no other comparable incidence has been found. Inspectors frequently commented upon the need for more field staff.

13. 8 A DIFFERENT STORY TEN YEARS LATER IN A DIFFERENT REGION

The inspectors and 'division' presented a different fact in circumstances which arose in 1967. A medium sized authority, number 015, sought official support for an increase in field staff. The superintending inspector had attended a meeting of the children's committee and had reported:

"The letter from the Regional Superintending Inspector was reprinted in the agenda. The members of the Committee showed a detailed knowledge of the work of the Children's Department and a quite surprising knowledge of the department's structure. Members were concerned with facts and figures and accepted those put to them. It was with difficulty, however that they accepted the requirement of supervision for a group of well-qualified officers. Members were prepared to accept the regional recommendations but in view of the present economic circumstances asked for the regional recommendations to be confirmed in an official letter to the chief executive."

On 21 February 1967, the children's officer wrote to thank the superintending inspector for the long letter of clarification which had been sent to the chief executive following the meeting referred to above. A copy had been distributed to each member of the committee. S/he wrote:

" ... with perhaps two exceptions, members of the Committee agreed that you had made out a case for these additional appointments. They are in a dilemma because the Institute of Municipal Treasurers' Report shows this authority with a high expenditure per child in care and a high expenditure per 1,000 child population. How can the Home Office justify more expenditure in a way acceptable to the Finance and to the Establishment Committee? We have expanded rapidly and have an unenviable reputation for 'empire building'. The Committee agree to the new posts and request that the Under Secretary of State should send an official letter to the Chief Executive. If these recommendations come from the Home Office the Finance and Establishment Committee might look more sympathetically on the proposals."

On 22 March 1967 a senior civil servant in Division 3 wrote to the chief executive:

"I am venturing to write to you semi-officially ... and should be most grateful for your advice. It has been suggested that an official letter would be helpful but I am not sure if this would be appropriate. The Council are already in full possession of the views of the Home Office from the Superintending Inspector. The Report on the Rate Support Grant Order 1946 of 14 December 1966 refers, in paragraph 9, to the economic situation's requiring some slowing of the development of some services but envisages, in paragraph 20, some expansion of child care staff. It would be consistent with the Report for a Local Authority, if they saw fit, to authorise an additional Child Care Officer. I am therefore inclined not to send an official letter but if you think it might be of assistance perhaps you will be kind enough to let me know.

On 23 March 1967, the chief executive, on reflection, replied that an official letter would be preferable. The children's committee's support for more staff was specifically conditional on an official letter dealing with comparability. Consequently, on 29 March 1967, the Under Secretary of State wrote officially to the authority and the council subsequently agreed to the additional staff.

13. 9 DID EXPERIENCE BRING OFFICIAL ENLIGHTENMENT?

What can explain two such diverse attitudes? Perhaps the contradiction can be attributed to change at the top of the inspectorate. Miss Cooper replaced Miss Scorrer in 1965. The two incidents were separated by ten years. It must be supposed that the second decade of children's committees brought to the inspectorate and to the civil servants a vision of social work in child care which had escaped their notice in the first ten years.

13.10 PERFORMANCE OF AUTHORITIES IN APPOINTING ADEQUATE NUMBERS OF CHILD CARE OFFICERS

TABLE 13.10

Performance of Twelve Largest Authorities in Appointing Child Care Officers England

Grade	Performance of Authority	Number of Authorities
1	Very Good	1
2	Good	0
3	Satisfactory	5
4	Below Satisfactory	5
5	Weak	1

Extracts from the inspectors' reports on each of the twelve authorities graded above:

Grade 1 : A 'Very Good' Authority

In 1956 the inspectors had criticised Authority 029 for 'marginal overstaffing and light caseloads in some areas'. The caseloads of four child care officers, (26 37 44 and 70) were cited, although the inspectors acknowledged that the child care officers spent time with children in homes, in finding prospective foster homes and visiting them before placing. They said that the child care officers were not working at top pressure but were painstaking in the children's interests and that the low admission risk indicated effective prevention. They spent a good deal of time visiting relatives and trying to avoid splitting families. In 1957 the inspectors had suggested reducing the number of child care officers by combining some into smaller areas although the staffing had been exhaustively scrutinised by the establishment committee and it was proposed to appoint more, since child care officers were working considerable overtime. Inspectors wrote that it was difficult to challenge the authority's actions since standards of child care and preventive work had improved substantially. They acknowledge the authority's high proportion of children boarded out and very low proportion of children in care and very low expenditure in proportion to population but thought this did not " ... necessarily provide a true basis of judgment on which to assess the quality of the work done".

Grade 3 : Five 'Satisfactory' Authorities

Authority 018 had about thirty child care officers and about 1,750 children in care. The inspectors made no comment on this.

The children's department of Authority 036 was well organised and well staffed by an enthusiastic body of child care officers. The inspectors made the axiomatic observation that more children could be boarded out or restored to parents if more child care officers were employed.

Authority 053 had about 25 child care officers and about 1,400 children in care. The inspectors made no criticism.

Inspectors had noted, in 1955, that sometimes nearly half the child care officers in Authority 067 were off sick, 'several of those being rather old'. By 1958 there was one child care officer for every 34 children in care or one for every ten boarded out: generous provision, but inspectors thought a caseload of forty in this area might be the equivalent of fifty or sixty in other areas.

In 1953, the chief executive of Authority 105 conducted an 'organisation and methods' enquiry which reported that caseloads of 140 for child care officers and 100 for team leaders were too low. However, by 1958, inspectors thought none of the caseloads was too high.

Grade 4 : Five 'Below Satisfactory' Authorities

The ratio of active field staff to children in care of Authority 017 was 1 : 87, compared with neighbouring authorities' 1 : 50 (approximately). Inspectors said that casework could probably not be improved without more staff.

The inspectors told Authority 028 that about ten more child care officers were needed to investigate applications for reception and to board out or restore children in group residential care.

The Secretary of State wrote to Authority 050 recommending the appointment of three more senior child care officers, since each senior was supervising 14 child care officers. After a delay of eight months, three child care officers were promoted to senior and replaced by only two new child care officers. A year later, the inspectors said this had relieved heavy pressure on the child care officers but little improvement was shown in the case records.

The inspectors reported that staff in Authority 062 was so inadequate that essential work was neglected. Children in homes were forgotten and reviews of boarded out children were neglected.

The inspectors reported that the child care officers were barely holding their own in Authority 106, but the committee would not consider appointing more without what inspectors described as a protracted and difficult set of negotiations.

Grade 5 : One 'Weak' Authority

The inspectors showed that caseloads often exceeded one hundred in Authority 034, which had a high proportion of children in care and few boarded out. One child care officer visited, by public transport, 113 children boarded out in 6,400 square miles.

13.11 NUMBER OF FIELD STAFF IN POST ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1969

Numbers of field staff in actually post on 30 September 1969 are shown in the following tables which relate numbers to the total population living in the area of each authority as estimated by the Registrar General. The figures related to people 'primarily engaged in work with children and their families'. They exclude children's officers, deputy children's officers, people working in residential settings, trainees and welfare assistants. Apparently the number of part-time workers was so small that they were not taken into account. The figure in the fourth column is obtained by dividing the total population by the number of field staff in post. The resultant figure is the total population, in thousands, served on average by one field officer. There are some surprising results. It was not unexpected that Oxfordshire would head the county list, with one child care officer serving a population of 9,000, nor that Hertfordshire should come fifth, with one officer to a population of 13,000. However, it was surprising that Dorset and the Kesteven division of Lincolnshire should be placed third equal. Other authorities, generally believed to be adequately staffed were Somerset, Lancashire and East Sussex, respectively ninth, tenth and twelfth on the list. Shropshire stands out in the ante-penultimate position with one officer to 33,000. Westmorland is not significant since they were only two child care officers and a great deal of the work would have been undertaken by the children's officer himself and he, of course, was not counted. The East Riding of Yorkshire, with nearly half a million population, employed proportionately only half as many child care officers as most of the other counties. The

provincial county boroughs presented, as might be expected, a greater demand for the services of field staff. They are bunched more closely than the counties. Two front-runners, Gateshead and Newcastle, had each in turn been served by Brian Roycroft as children's officer. They shared this distinction with Oxford City which had Lucy Faithfull as children's officer. The big conurbations like Birmingham, Bristol, Bradford, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield, all demanded one officer for every 12,000 population. The London boroughs, not unexpectedly, show relatively high staffing levels. The first twelve, ranging from Tower Hamlets with 2.7 thousand population per officer, to Greenwich with 10,000 per officer, comprised the twelve authorities with the highest staffing levels. They are the twelve inner London boroughs, who inherited their staffing levels and most of their children's officers from the London County Council. Boroughs like Wandsworth and Greenwich, with limited degrees of urban deprivation rated more child care officers in relation to population than any of the remaining twenty outer London boroughs including, notably, Newham and Barking. Haringey and Brent come in the first of four outer London boroughs. The needs of these four were not, of course, so markedly heavy in 1969 as they became later. The remaining sixteen suburban boroughs are unremarkable, ranging from one officer for 14,000 population in Bromley, to one for 29,000 in Waltham Forest. Harrow is a special case, having few centres of deprivation.

TABLE 13.11.1
Number of Field Staff in Post
English Counties : 30 September 1969

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
OXFORDSHIRE	272	30	9.07
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	341	34	10.03
LINCS : KESTEVEN	158	15	10.53
DORSET	361	31	11.65
CUMBERLAND	221	18	12.28
WILTSHIRE	486	39	12.46
HEREFORDSHIRE	138	11	12.55
HERTFORDSHIRE	923	70	13.19
LINCS : HOLLAND	106	8	13.25
SUFFOLK : WEST	161	12	13.42
BERKSHIRE	501	37	13.54
SOMERSET	597	42	14.21
ISLE OF WIGHT	100	7	14.29
SUFFOLK : EAST	258	18	14.33
HUNTS & PETERBOROUGH	203	14	14.50
LANCS & BOOTLE	2,579	176	14.65
SUSSEX : EAST	442	30	14.73
LINCS : LINCOLN	375	24	15.62
SUSSEX : WEST	491	31	15.84
KENT & CANTERBURY	1,362	84	16.21
NORTHUMBERLAND	504	31	16.26
YORKSHIRE : NORTH	329	20	16.45
CHESHIRE	1,105	67	16.49
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	586	35	16.74
DEVON	452	27	16.74
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	675	40	16.87
DERBYSHIRE	665	37	17.97
WESTMORLAND	72	4	18.00
BEDFORDSHIRE	302	16	18.87
NORFOLK	445	23	19.35

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
LEICESTERSHIRE	468	24	19.50
WORCESTERSHIRE	456	23	19.83
HAMPSHIRE	996	49	20.33
WARWICKSHIRE	625	30	20.83
DURHAM	813	39	20.85
STAFFORDSHIRE	736	35	21.03
ESSEX	1,191	56	21.27
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	302	14	21.57
SURREY	1,000	46	21.74
YORKSHIRE : WEST	1,792	80	22.40
YORKSHIRE : EAST	257	11	23.36
CORNWALL & SCILLY	382	16	23.87
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	554	22	25.18
RUTLAND	27	1	27.00
SHROPSHIRE	337	12	28.08
TOTAL	25,146	1,489	16.99
Median Authority : Cheshire			16.49

TABLE 13.11.2
Number of Field Staff in Post
English County Boroughs : 30 September 1969

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
GATESHEAD	96	15	6.40
OXFORD CITY	109	17	6.41
PORTSMOUTH	197	29	6.79
OLDHAM	106	15	7.07
PRESTON	93	13	7.15
NEWCASTLE	222	30	7.40
WARRINGTON	68	9	7.55
BIRMINGHAM	1,013	128	7.91
ROCHDALE	95	12	7.92
SOUTHAMPTON	215	26	8.27
BURNLEY	76	9	8.44
BOURNEMOUTH	153	18	8.50
BRISTOL	425	50	8.50
DEWSBURY	51	6	8.50
BOLTON	154	18	8.55
TYNEMOUTH	69	8	8.62
PLYMOUTH	239	27	8.85
MANCHESTER	541	61	8.87
GLOUCESTER	90	10	9.00
TEESSIDE	345	38	9.08
DONCASTER	83	9	9.22
LINCOLN	74	8	9.25
BLACKBURN	102	11	9.27
STOCKPORT	140	15	9.33
BATH	85	9	9.44
DARLINGTON	86	9	9.55
LIVERPOOL	607	63	9.63
EASTBOURNE	70	7	10.00
WIGAN	81	8	10.12
IPSWICH	123	12	10.25

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
BRIGHTON	166	16	10.37
WORCESTER CITY	73	7	10.43
DERBY	219	21	10.43
ROTHERHAM	85	8	10.62
BARROW-IN-FURNESS	64	6	10.67
NOTTINGHAM CITY	300	28	10.71
SALFORD	131	12	10.92
NORWICH	122	11	11.09
BURY	68	6	11.33
HALIFAX	91	8	11.37
NORTHAMPTON CITY	127	11	11.54
SAINT HELENS	104	9	11.55
BRADFORD	294	25	11.76
SHEFFIELD	520	44	11.82
GRIMSBY	96	8	12.00
HASTINGS	72	6	12.00
HARTLEPOOL	97	8	12.12
BARNSLEY	73	6	12.17
LEICESTER CITY	284	23	12.35
KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	285	23	12.39
GREAT YARMOUTH	50	4	12.50
SOUTH SHIELDS	101	8	12.62
YORK CITY	105	8	13.12
WALSALL	185	14	13.21
CHESTER	93	7	13.28
SOUTHEND	163	12	13.58
TORBAY	109	8	13.62
EXETER	96	7	13.71
BIRKENHEAD	138	10	13.80
SOUTHPORT	84	6	14.00
CARLISLE	71	5	14.20
WARLEY	163	11	14.82
WOLVERHAMPTON	269	18	14.94

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
WAKEFIELD	60	4	15.00
LEEDS	485	32	15.16
SOLIHULL	107	7	15.28
DUDLEY	186	12	15.50
COVENTRY	335	21	15.95
LUTON	161	10	16.10
READING	132	8	16.50
WEST BROMWICH	167	10	16.70
WALLASEY	185	11	16.82
STOKE-ON-TRENT	265	15	17.67
HUDDERSFIELD	131	7	18.71
BLACKPOOL	151	8	18.87
SUNDERLAND	217	10	21.70
BURTON-ON-TRENT	50	2	25.00
TOTAL	13,338	1,251	10.64
Median Authority : Norwich			11.09

TABLE 13.11.3
Number of Field Staff in Post
London Boroughs : 30 September 1969

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
TOWER HAMLETS	165	63	2.62
ISLINGTON	199	57	3.49
CAMDEN	201	43	4.67
HACKNEY	217	39	5.56
WESTMINSTER	224	39	5.74
HAMMERSMITH	185	27	6.85
SOUTHWARK	260	37	7.03
LEWISHAM	265	34	7.79
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	184	23	8.00
LAMBETH	303	37	8.19
WANDSWORTH	299	32	9.34
GREENWICH	216	22	9.82
HARINGEY	237	23	10.30
NEWHAM	236	21	11.24
EALING	299	26	11.50
BRENT	279	23	12.13
BARKING	166	13	12.77
HOUNSLOW	206	16	12.87
BROMLEY	304	23	13.22
KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES	140	10	14.00
HILLINGDON	238	16	14.87
BEXLEY	216	14	15.43
ENFIELD	267	16	16.69
SUTTON	169	10	16.90
HAVERING	247	14	17.64
BARNET	304	17	17.88
CROYDON	332	18	18.44
RICHMOND	174	9	19.33
MERTON	177	9	19.67

Authority	Total Population (Thousands)	No of Field Officers	Population Served Per Field Officer (Thousands)
REDBRIDGE	237	12	19.75
WALTHAM FOREST	234	10	23.40
HARROW	203	7	29.00
TOTAL	7,383	760	9.71
Median Authority : Greenwich			9.82

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

"You'd better interfere as little as you can as you go about the world. Or at least do your victims the honour of not trying to justify your actions, once you've done what you've done."

Fay Weldon

14. 1 WHAT IS MEANT BY 'CASEWORK'?

The word 'casework' was in vogue at the start of the twentieth century in the writings of C H Loch ²⁸⁰. When children's departments were first formed, the word 'casework' was not much used. When it was used it meant simply 'dealing with individual cases'. This chapter summarises the degrees of competence with which local authorities discharged the day-to-day responsibility of looking after children in their direct care and in supervising other children who were living apart from their parents and those at risk of non-accidental injury. Extracts from the inspectors' reports show that authorities' relations with children, families and other agencies varied greatly. Some of the best departments were smaller ones where the influence of the children's officer or of some informal leader might permeate the attitude of some or most of field, residential and administrative staff. After being closely acquainted with the performance of hundreds of professionals, spread over forty years, it must be concluded that the capacity for doing the job well was to be initially in the personality of the workers, although training could greatly enhance them. In evaluating performance, both in residential settings and in the field, it became apparent that there were those who brought to their work a lifetime of sensitivity towards

others. There were others who had to be **taught** to empathise with children, their parents and others. Mia Kellmer-Pringle identified four needs of children which might be guides to casework in child care ²⁶³;

- i The need for love and security
- ii The need for new experiences
- iii The need for praise and recognition
- iv The need for responsibility

14. 2 MODELS FOR CASEWORK IN CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENTS

At least six varieties of approach characterised the work of early children's departments.

1 The Institutional Model

'Institutional' is not used here in a perjorative sense. It indicates the wish to confine practices. Many fought to refine ideas so that children could do more than enjoy wholesome food, serviceable clothing, recreational opportunities and a stable regime. Many staff, in the offices as well as in residential establishments, had spent rewarding lives in seeking to perfect systems of fostering, adoption, group care and family support services. For example, evidence to the Curtis Committee by Leon Willshire, public assistance officer for Southampton, was summarised in The Bulletin of the Association Children's Officers:

2 The Crusading Model

The second mode might be called the crusading approach. Inspectors told of children received and retained in care (sometimes illegally) in the belief that being in care was a good thing in itself and that some parents of children tended to exercise a bad influence. A measure of this spirit was to effect essential changes. But for the tenacity of Lady Allen, there might never have been a Curtis Report. A confidential address to psychiatric social workers in the late nineteen-forties said ⁰¹¹:

"What standards of morality are you going to accept? Are you going to let a child return to his mother if she's living with someone who isn't his father? I say 'yes' if the relationship between the cohabiters is reasonably stable, but I'm quite sure that all of my committee do not agree."

The children's officer for Authority 047 told inspectors "there are some marriages which are biological only and we make up for this by providing

substitutes for family life". In 1955, Clare Winnicott, lecturer in charge of the child care course at the London School of Economics wrote ⁴²⁰:

"The rescuer is not suited to the more delicate work of modern child care which demands of the workers a more direct, straightforward drive that is close to that of parents who care. The present issue is confused by their need to save, rather than to find and foster what is good in a situation."

3 The Medical Model

The third approach was a psychiatric one. It assumed that the need for substitute care arose from psychiatric components in the parents' personalities. These social workers were exemplified by the children's officer for Croydon who told Dr John Bowlby that when a child came into care, " ... I always find out why the applicant cannot get help from relatives and neighbours, and almost invariably it is because he is an un-neighbourly person who has alienated the willingness of others to help him". Bowlby added, "Personality factors may thus play an important part in destroying both the first and second lines of defence against 'homelessness' " ⁰⁰⁶. There is a stern moralistic note in these two observations.

4 The socio-economic model

Current readers may be surprised to know that many children's officers rarely saw poverty as a significant factor in causing deprivation. When the Association of Children's Officers circulated the first draft of their pamphlet, 'Cruelty to Children' in 1952, one member protested that s/he was not prepared to accept that poverty and bad housing were significant factors causing deprivation of parental care ^P. In fact both the draft and the published version of the pamphlet had little to say on these issues. From 1948 to 1971, it was fairly rare for a children's officer to mention the possibility of a straight political remedy for the ills of deprivation. Closely as children's officers grew to know one another, most remained unaware of the party political preferences of their colleagues. The first shot for the sociologists was fired by Barbara Wootton, who not only stressed economic factors causing childhood deprivation but also guyed the growing cult of 'casework', saying that it required little more than commonsense and good manners ⁴²³. Just when children's departments were being phased out, one or two children's officers associated themselves with the labour party pamphlet, 'Crime, A Challenge to Us All', and the Association of Children's Officers submitted evidence to Lord Longford, its author ²⁷⁵. Meanwhile, however, the socio-economic initiative had been seized by the lively Association of Child Care Officers whose chair, in 1965, was occupied by Tom White, a labour parliamentary candidate, and by the Child Poverty Action Group whose leader, Frank Field, was on the staff of a city children's committee.

5 The Sectarian Model

Modern readers may not expect the intensity of feeling which has been displayed over the issue of religious denomination. These were characterised by the court room battles between Dr Barnardo and the

Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1889, in which Dr Barnardo, more than once, sought to provide a protestant upbringing for a child or **allow a child to remain** with non-catholic foster parents, against the wishes of the Roman Catholic authorities. Authorities were under pressure to receive children into care so as to ensure their denominational upbringing. In Authority 015, a formal approach to the committee was made by an influential lay person, to receive into an appropriate denominational establishment a toddler who was happily living with private foster parents of a different denomination. Likewise, a co-opted member of the committee asked that the child of his resident domestic servant should be received and placed in a similar establishment, " ... so as to ensure his proper religious upbringing". In some authorities, a rigid attitude to denominational upbringing linger on into the nineteen-fifties and sixties. For example, in Authority 021, a high proportion of long-stay Roman Catholic children were entrusted to convent homes. The London County Council, with a vigorous Roman Catholic vice chair of the children's committee, remained for years resistant to the boarding out of Roman Catholic children with foster parents of other denominations, even when they undertook to bring the child up in his own persuasion. The council's children's committee eventually resolved that the child's whole welfare was to take priority over matching a foster child's religious persuasion to that of foster parents. Even after this, an internal audit (outlined in 12.17 foregoing), found that children were being kept in group residential care for denominational reasons, apparently because the child care officers were unconvinced of the committee's determination to put fostering before denominational parity. By contrast, in 1957 the committee of authority 109 was divided on the wisdom of removing a child who was boarded out with foster parents of a different persuasion and the issue had to be decided by the whole council, after public debate which was reported in the press.

6 The Conditioning Model

Some agencies, particularly the approved schools and the special schools, not unnaturally envisaged their tasks primarily as educators or trainers, endeavouring to change unsatisfactory attitudes and patterns of behaviour. The cause of 'training' continued to be advocated long after statistics had shown that a high proportion of their boys committed further offences within a year or two of leaving the schools. (Girls were usually committed as being in moral danger or beyond control; conditions, which after the age of seventeen, did not generally attract the attention of the police.)

14. 3 AN EARLY ATTEMPT TO APPLY CASEWORK PRINCIPLES TO CHILD CARE

Not until the nineteen-eighties did it become acceptable to say, as did Maurice Hawker, Director of Social Services for Essex, that "care may injure your health". Nevertheless there were the germs of this attitude in, for example, the efforts of the Devon children's committee to prevent children from coming into care, which are recorded in Jean Packman's book, 'The Child's Generation'

This is referred to more fully in chapter 7 on admission to and from care. By the early nineteen-fifties, the concept of casework as an activity which could be carried out according to a set of principles, began to spread among British social workers. The Central Council for Training in Child Care encouraged cross-fertilisation by arranging for American teachers to come here and take part in refresher courses. Exchange of jobs between the United Kingdom and the United States of America was encouraged. Some idea of the conceptions and misconceptions which prevailed in one particular children's department may be gained from the following draft, prepared for discussion and guidance in the children's department of Authority 015 in 1953. With religious and moralistic overtones, not untypical of the social work of the times, it drew heavily on the work of Hollis and Perlman ³²³. It is dated 10 June 1953:

"THE NATURE OF CASEWORK

"The central function of a child care officer is nowadays described as 'casework'. It consists of helping children; and parents, foster parents and others concerned with the child; to develop warm and positive relationships with each other; and conversely to reduce those factors in a situation which militates against good relationships. The attempt to improve people's relations with each other is nothing new. It is implicit in most religions and more particularly in Christian teaching. Side by side with the use of human relationships, the early social worker developed her capacity to manipulate the client's environment by getting him relatively congenial work, a dwelling-place, recreation, instruction and so on. In harsher times the urgency of these external needs was so pressing that it tended to obscure the personal factors. It came as a surprise to many that the progressive elimination of poverty and slums, and the spread of education, did not seem to produce a correspondingly spectacular increase in happiness and emotional well-being. We must not, however, underestimate the importance of environmental factors. If there are increases in the criminal statistics, these may simply be a product of better police services. The manipulation of environment still occupies a good part of the time and energy of social workers and we should be foolish to dismiss it as unimportant. But it is manipulation with a difference: the better social worker does not manage her clients' affairs, she seeks so far as possible to help him to manage them himself and to make his own choices. The distinguishing features of the good case worker are:

"a In manipulative social work to leave as much as possible to the client himself.

"b In her casework with the client, to proceed as far as possible on a basis of scientific understanding of human motivation applied with as much knowledge, intelligence and intuition as she is able to command. The caseworker must have some understanding of unconscious motivation in order to appreciate how people are feeling and what determines their attitudes towards others. She must also be aware that in trying to help people through developing a relationship with them we make them to some extent dependent upon us. She must resist the tendency to feel flattered by this

dependency, seeking instead the professional satisfaction of handling the situation so well that the client is able to detach himself from the worker and become emotionally self-supporting."

On 10 June 1953, in an article entitled, 'Basic Structure of Casework Process',

Helen Perlman described a problem solving process:

- "1 Know the facts.
- "2 Study meaning and relationship of the facts.
- "3 Reach a conclusion and test it.
- "4 Reconsider as situation develops."

She went on to recommend the means of helping the problem solving:

- "1 Use of relationship.
- "2 Use of the agency's resources.
- "3 Use of conscious, structured problem solving process; ascribing meaning to perceived facts; separating out the kernel of the problem and the client's attitude to it. The whole situation may be overwhelming; when it is partialised it is cut to size. The analysis of connections, cause and effect for example, helps the client to account for phenomena which have hitherto defied his understanding. These processes take place within the sustenance and feeling response of a meaningful relationship. Arrival at tentative conclusion on basis of new orientation and better integration of thought and feeling. If action is unsuccessful it is brought back to safety and guidance in a case work interview."

Florence Hollis said, in 'Principles and Assumptions Underlying Casework Practice':

"Acceptance means a wish for the well-being of the other persons. We need sufficient understanding of the client's need to behave in a particular anti-social way and of the suffering that precedes or flows from such behaviour but we are non-condemnatory. Hate the sin but love the sinner.

"True acceptance is only possible if the worker can feel that the client's problem might be his.

"Of course we must be sincere. We don't have to be constantly expressing approval in order to demonstrate acceptance. The important thing is for the client to arrive at his own thinking rather than be told ours.

"Self-determination is better expressed as self-responsibility: the responsibility of the client for his conduct of his own affairs. This involves his consideration of the rights and needs of others. But to use the right wisely he must have the opportunity to exercise it. Man cannot develop knowledge of himself and power of control without the

opportunities to make choices.

"Therefore the social worker must avoid a subtle or unsubtle domination. With sick people and children the right of self-determination is limited by law to a greater extent than the fit adults. For example, permitting a seriously psychotic patient to make his own decision to enter hospital is a good augury for treatment.

"This does not imply a placating attitude but sufficient internal strength to free the worker from the need to use authority unnecessarily.

"The client will be far readier to look at inconsistencies in his own response to his own ideas than at his reluctance to accept ours. The caseworker may, however, give advice when he has knowledge of a situation which is beyond a client's knowledge. But such advice will be given in an atmosphere in which the client is free to reject. In this process energy is released, fears are reduced, self-confidence and self-defence grow.

"Some principles of casework practice rest upon scientific findings; others upon the accumulated experience and intuitions of our social and religious culture. Indeed, scientific findings often converge with religious experience. Religion says the chief evil of the world is hate: that fear is the outcome of hate. And that hate must be overcome by love which casts our fear. This is essentially the caseworkers' jobs to increase the individual's ability to love to enable him to control his hate and to convert destructive aggression into constructive. This is done by reducing frustration in the environment: by giving reassurance and appreciation which decreases the feeling of being unloved. The development from narcissism to object love: the capacity of loving people as they are and not as we would like them to be: to want to contribute to their happiness, rather than to want them to contribute to our happiness. We believe that many patterns of life are useful and possible and each individual should be helped to find a mode of life which establishes his own equilibrium.

"Hence we encourage each student to keep his own spontaneous way of relating to people.

"We must often be content to relieve suffering rather than to cure.

"Scientific method has added this to intuitive methods: observations: comparison: inference: hypothesising: classifying: generalising: testing: validating.

"Workers must not arbitrarily exclude certain areas of life from scientific study. One does not classify people. One classifies behaviour or the situation of a person. But we must recognise similarity in the behaviour of people in similar situations. The more a classification is concerned with outward signs, rather than inward motivation, the less useful it will be.

Intuition is a direct apprehension of reality. It is a form of insight. If it is false, it is only pseudo-intuition, a bias taken on truth. Intuition enables it to perceive what a client is feeling. But intuition must always

be tested against facts. Too much empathy means we are enmeshed (sic) in the client's problem."

It all seems pretty mundane now, but English children's departments did not universally look to America or anywhere else to formulate and write down principles to guide their daily work in 1953. For example, Miss Jane Rowell, in her presidential address to the Association of Children's Officers in 1959, questioned the suitability of:

" ... this kind of intensive casework training ... Did we want child care officers ... to be expected by their training, to think of children as cases, to talk to parents, children and foster parents as clients and to practise a kind of psychotherapy on parents and foster parents?"

14. 4 GENERICISM

An important aspect of the new thinking about casework was the recognition that the practice of casework in the various settings; such as child care, hospital social work, mental health or probation; was based on common principles. The word 'generic', unfortunately acquired a mystique. One Home Office inspector, hearing that a new generically-trained social worker had been appointed to a department enquired whether she was 'doing generic work?'. The concept of social work as based on a set of generically applied principles was sometimes seen as a threat by those who had been trained specifically to work in a particular setting. Albeit that the features common to social work in all settings were acknowledged in Britain before 1954, the alarm which was felt by some social workers about the concept was not to be dissipated for at least twenty years. The anxiety was deepened in 1968 by the Seebohm Committee's recommendation that child care should be reincorporated into wider-ranging social services departments ⁰⁷⁸. One social worker, first reacting to these proposals, wondered whether there would be jobs for trained child care officers in the new 'generic' departments. Some people believed that the formation of

the British Association of Social Workers and the merging of local authorities' personal social services, less than a year later, were two phases of a single operation. The consequent disruption and confusion was to be deepened by far-reaching changes in the composition of provincial local authorities on 1 April 1974, disturbing to many social workers caught up in the new structures. That generically-trained casework could be employed in a specific setting was marked by the publication, in 1962, of 'Casework in Child Care' by Jean Castel ⁰⁵⁶.

14. 5 THE KEY WORKER, FUNDAMENTAL TO EFFECTIVE CASEWORK

The Curtis Committee said it would be impracticable for a children's officer of a large authority to keep in touch with all the children. Paragraph 445 said that she should allocate a group of children to each of her officers who would, subject to accident, illness, change of employment and retirement, be a friend of those children throughout their childhood and adolescence. This was a clear recognition of the need for each child to have one officer directly and continuously responsible for dealing with his or her affairs. In the early years the concept of the 'planner' or 'key worker' tended to be applied only to the function of supervising boarded out children. Children in group residential care were not always generally recognised as needing attention. In some departments the role of 'residential' social worker was sadly diminished. It should, however, be acknowledged that many matrons and superintendents of children's homes, large and small, were deeply concerned for the welfare and futures of the children and recognised the need to keep prodding 'the office' into making plans, for example with regard to schooling and future careers and with managing relationships with parents and families. There were, however, many children in care for whom no-one bore responsibility for long-term planning except, nominally, the children's officer. The residential social workers undertook the

vital day-to-day responsibility for children in their homes but were often neither consulted nor involved with a child's past or future or his current family relationships. A worker who dealt with an application for reception into care might put the file away once the child had been received. In some authorities this worker might be expected to get the file out again when any new issues concerning the child arose. In others, the receiving worker would have no further contact with the child or his family. Newly arising issues might, in a small authority, be dealt with by the children's officer herself, or in larger authorities perhaps by an administrative officer working according to established rules. Eileen Younghusband commented in 1951 ⁴³⁵:

"In some departments crucial decisions could depend on individual unverified experience and opposing values not put to the test of objective enquiry, while in other departments there was careful work and discussion among colleagues. Throughout the period there was a striking difference between the standards achieved by different local authorities."

A grave example of what Dame Eileen described came to light in Authority 015, in 1951, before the system of key worker had been established there:

"A boy, aged twelve, living with his unsupported mother had been committed to care following some minor offences. After committal he was lodged in a children's home. Some weeks later the maternal grandparents wrote to ask if the boy could come to stay with them. Without reference to any social worker a reply was drafted in 'the office' and signed by a senior administrator in the name of the children's officer. The letter said that it was not the policy of the department to let a child stay away from the children's home until at least six months after committal to care."

In taking steps to put this right and to prevent recurrence, it was discovered that there was an informal leader in the general office who described his desk as 'query corner'. Clerical and administrative staff, facing a new administrative problem, would go to this likeable and enthusiastic functionary for advice. He was, indeed, a mine of useful information on a range of subjects from the best cut-price retailers to tips on completing visitors' expenses claims. It was not unknown for the head of a children's home to telephone to 'the office' to ask

if, for example, a child might have a day out with a relative or friend. Such an enquiry might be dealt with 'off the cuff', according to some supposedly established principle which had built up concerning a particular family. The scope for prejudice and inflexibility is endless, for example concerning out-of-pocket expenditure, exceptional clothing needs, parental contributions to children's maintenance, religious observance, journeys to and from school and so on and on. A clerical worker, who wielded authority over some apparently minor, administrative decisions once confessed that he 'did not like' a particular thirteen-year-old girl in the council's care. He had never set eyes on her, or had at most, seen her passing in the corridor. His feelings seem to have been aroused because she was already, before committal to care, a competent horsewoman and the committee had approved her being encouraged to continue riding. Permission to have a day off from school to spend with a father home on leave from the army might be refused on the ground that 'the department never allows a child to miss school except for medical reasons'. Another undesirable consequence of routing decision-making was that significant information affecting a child's circumstances might be lost for ever if, say, grandparents enquired by telephone and the respondent did not record their name, address or telephone number. The need for continuing attention from a key worker was not universally recognised by some authorities in the early nineteen-fifties. In 1952, a children's officer questioned the propriety of counting children in the authorities' homes on the caseloads of field officers, or indeed, as a measure of the responsibilities of the department as a whole, other than the financial burden. Recognition that a child care officer had as much, or more, to do with the parents as with the child, led to the appointment of a family co-ordinator (incongruously nicknamed 'family planner') in some departments where brothers and sisters were being supervised by different social workers.

14. 6 EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT QUALITIES OF CASEWORK

From the beginning, some children's departments started to think and plan, and record the effect which their activities were having on individual children. Examples of the very different but equally impressive way in which the first children's officers for Gloucestershire and Dudley respectively tackled their casework tasks are given at some length in foregoing Chapter 3.

14. 7 A STARK CONTRAST FROM 1947

The following claim, to have performed successful casework with a family in difficulties, was published in 1947 in Child Care Quarterly, a newly-founded child care journal which subsequently became highly reputable. The article, entitled 'The Root of the Problem' by Ms Cicely Leadley Brown, MBE, Barrister-at-Law and secretary of the Liverpool Society for the Protection of Children, quoted extracts from a report of the society's inspectors:

"Having failed to get into the house by the ordinary method, I went to the back and burst open the yard door ... I fell and, as I lay on the ground, I could see a curtain being moved. I ran to the window and shouted that if I were not allowed entrance I would break in. A woman came from the house ... at first she refused to let me in, but I told her that if she did not I would blow my police whistle, and she would have the police and all the neighbourhood around."

Then followed a description of the premises:

" ... thirty filthy milk bottles, dirt on the floor six inches deep ... I could not at first examine the home as the atmosphere was so foul ... eventually the husband got the window open. I found the children well-nourished, and I told the parents it would depend on the condition in which I found the home on my next visit whether they should be allowed to remain there."

On a later visit there was a transformed home. In a final report the inspector said that the windows were clean and open, the kitchen floor had been cleaned (with spades) and lino laid down, the beds were clean and the milk bottles returned. The article contains no hint of explanation for this transformation

other than the inspector's threat to remove the children. Ms Leadley Brown concluded:

"For one case of cruelty in 1948 there were 50 in 1920, but there is still an appalling amount of neglect in spite of better education and higher wages. The results of neglect are often more serious than those of cruelty."

This kind of attitude is not to be taken as typical of voluntary organisations in social work before 1948. But at the same time it reveals underlying emotions which affected the attitudes of some workers in statutory and voluntary circles.

TABLE 14.7 Standards of Casework in the Twelve Largest Authorities England

Grade	Performance of Authority	Number of Authorities
2	Good	3
3	Satisfactory	6
4	Below Satisfactory	2
5	Weak	1

Extracts from the inspectors' reports on each of the twelve authorities graded above:

Grade 2 : Three 'Good' Authorities

The inspectors said that Authority 036 was well organised, with an enthusiastic body of child care officers. Every child was the responsibility of an individual officer. Brothers and sisters were being reunited. An assistant children's officer attended four sessions weekly of a special advisory service, run by a psychiatrist, which was not only advisory but discussed specific children with the houseparents concerned. As a result, several children had been restored to parental care, receiving close supervision.

The inspectors said that the child care officers in Authority 053 were hard and conscientious workers. Foster parents knew from the outset the desirability of keeping in touch with parents. Child care officers were well-informed of parents' circumstances and were alert

to effect restoration. Some boarding school children went to their brothers' and sisters' foster homes in the school holidays. Child care officers took children to visit brothers and sisters.

The child care officers in Authority 106 had good links with the children whose needs they had investigated and whom they had received into care. They maintained those links while the child was in a nursery or reception home. They freely visited parents anywhere in the authority's area. So far as practicable, one child care officer supervised all children from a family. Child care officers attached to 'family group homes' knew their children well and made careful plans and choices of foster homes. Regular reviews ensured the child was not considered in isolation. Boarding out black children was not seen as presenting special difficulty.

Grade 3 : Six 'Satisfactory' Authorities

The inspectors were impressed with the quality of the field staff within the severe limitations of centralised control in Authority 018. The child care officers took seriously their responsibilities for children in residential group care, visiting frequently and most of them favoured maintaining children's contacts with their parents. Decisions were based on written documents. Reports were sketchy. The children's officer thought that child care officers had neither the time nor the training to undertake preventive work. One area children's officer preferred not to have a sign outside the office. The child care officers had a reasonably good understanding of children's needs and developmental stages, but rarely considered the supposed motives of foster parents.

In Authority 028, children were carefully matched with foster parents without undue haste, the placement being spread over weekends and holidays. There was a definite policy of trying to keep families together and reuniting those scattered in the past. Efforts were made to keep children in touch with their parents and a few isolated cases of outstandingly good restoration of children to parents were noted, but many more could be restored if the committee provided more staff. There had been successful intensive drives for foster homes.

Authority 029 was well organised, with the accent heavily on fieldwork. The arrangements for child care appeared generally satisfactory. The attitude was enlightened, focussed on the children's needs. Staff was numerically and qualitatively adequate, showing evidence of full, extensive and continuous examination of the circumstances before separating child from family and close follow-up of applications not accepted. Regular reviews assured that the chances of restoration were regularly considered. Boarding out was enthusiastically pursued, but inspectors hinted that there was possibly a need for more caution.

Authority 034 occupied over four pages of the report. It concluded that the service to individual children was marred by poor administration and shortage of field staff but the committee had sound theoretical ideas and a cadre of child care officers, many of

whom had insight and commitment. No one at the central office had fully realised the manpower needed to do the painstaking family casework, concentrating equally on prevention, rehabilitation, boarding out and bringing brothers and sisters together which the committee exhorted them to do.

The inspectors found that the standard of work in the areas of Authority 062 was good. Some of the older child care officers were set in their ways. There was good liaison between areas so that available foster homes were put to best use. The area children's officers visited the homes in their areas and got to know the children but the child care officers, lacking transport, did not visit as often as they should. All recently appointed child care officers did relief duty in children's homes. Good work was done in keeping brothers and sisters together and in keeping children in touch with their families. The superintendent of the reception centre was very co-operative and consulted with the area children's officer about plans for children.

The inspectors thought that the standard of recording in Authority 105 did not do justice to the fieldwork. Placement was thoughtful and careful. Child care officers conducted newly-admitted children to the reception home and kept in constant touch with them while they were there. All the short-stay foster homes visited were very satisfactory. There was, however, a long way to go before individual plans, based on the possibility of return home, were made for each child.

Grade 4 : Four 'Below Satisfactory' Authorities

Considerable variations in practice were shown throughout Authority 017, reflecting the sensitivity and energy of individual child care officers. There was widespread neglect of the children's relationships with their families, at the time of admission and subsequently. Children were moved without consulting them, their parents or their child care officers. There was lack of imagination, inspiration and leadership at the central office although the organisation was fundamentally sound.

The inspectors' report gave little information about the quality of the work in Authority 067, but they were critical of most aspects.

Grade 5 : One 'Weak' Authority

The inspectors said that the only way to improve the quality of the work in Authority 050 was by decentralising staff and records. Each child care officer should have supervision from an area children's officer. Records of applications for reception were not very informative and showed few examples of understanding and insight. The admission history sheets showed lack of training and supervision. Initial case histories were skeletal; a brief note of reason for admission and little description of background and relationships on which to base future plans. There was a manifest lack of continuity in caring. Children went 'home on trial' without much prior contact with parents. Many decisions were taken quickly

on scant information. Sometimes more than one person had taken conflicting decisions. Heads of homes didn't know who was responsible for what. New untrained child care officers started work on a patch, after a fortnight in the central office, without local files. They mailed their reports to the central office where they were seen by a senior officer. Reports showed lack of knowledge of children. 'Uncaseworklike' directives were mailed to child care officers who seemed frustrated and not part of the child care service.

14. 8 A STEP FORWARD IN 1965

A principal contention of this thesis has been that the child care workers of 1948-1971 failed, on the whole, to let the children know that they understood and shared their feelings of loss. A gleam of imagination shown by Harry Mapstone, children's officer for Somerset, in 1965, placed a new tool in the hands of casework in child care. In the 'Bulletin' of the Association of Children's Officers, Mapstone described an idea which had tremendous potential for better individual casework with children in long stay care. For some time Somerset child care workers had tried to build up a stream of memories focussed on each child's collection of photographs, documents and other mementoes. It had started at a reunion of former children and staff who had been together in a residential nursery twenty years earlier during the war. Mapstone said, "We determined to make sure, as far as we were able, we would provide something for each child to see and hold onto for himself". Somerset County Council accepted the report, saying:

"Children who have their own family, grow up among adults who have memories of them from their earliest years and who take pleasure in keeping such things as snapshots of them and of members of their family and friends and who help them to keep some of their early treasures. Children growing up without such family backgrounds have a special need of a real basis for the memories of their early childhood, and practical means whereby gaps in their memories may be filled, and the continuity of their experiences be preserved. It is therefore important that those who have the care of young children should keep a simple descriptive record for each child including snapshots of him, and that this record should be part of his personal possessions. The committee are asked to approve expenditure for photograph albums costing about three shillings each, and for films.

In the past child care officers have themselves paid for the films, developing and making prints. The cost of this suggestion would not exceed £50 for the remainder of the financial year."

Examination of inspectors' reports on some thirty children's departments during the six further years of their existence yielded, unhappily, no record whatever of the crucial proposal's being implemented in other authorities. Mapstone's proposal contained the germ of what subsequently became 'life story books'. Whether their potential has been effectively developed since 1971 lies outside the scope of this study, but a word should be said about using them, except under people skilled in facing the consequences.

14. 9 THREE ASPECTS OF CASEWORK

The quality of casework may seem trivial to modern eyes. However, the criteria upon which judgements were made, the degree of care and expertise applied to making decisions and the level of authority at which those decisions were taken were crucial. They significantly affected, in the short or long term, and sometimes for life, the wellbeing of a million or more people who passed through public care between 1948 and 1971. To evaluate the quality of casework performed by children's departments, three aspects of their performance should be examined. Firstly, the exercise of responsibility as citizens by members of the department. In their daily work they confronted major social issues. They saw poverty and deprivation and, unlike the victims of those two evils, they could formulate ideas for diminishing those evils. Sharing, as they did, the experiences of disadvantaged people, they were better placed than most to ensure that these experiences were made known to the general public, the electorate. Spurred by the sight of suffering, they were the more strongly motivated to devise schemes for eliminating, or at least alleviating it. Secondly, the social workers, in common with people in all other occupations, owed a duty towards

the user of their services and also toward fellow workers in the same, and allied, fields. This is sometimes called 'professionalism' but that is much too narrow a concept. The duty is owed by craftsmen as deeply as by those of the chattering professions such as clergy, doctor, lawyer, politician, teacher, social work and writer. It is owed equally by those in the least glamorous occupations, cleaner, maintenance man and plumber's mate. Thirdly, came the duty to maintain and develop their expertise. Performance in each of these three aspects can be illustrated by the single case study of the Curtis Family. The study displays a wide diversity of quality in the way in which these three aspects of the caseworkers' responsibilities were discharged. Take first the duty of the department's workers as citizens. They knew that the Curtis boys had been separated from their parents and from each other by some obscure accident of the housing system, their home having been demolished and no alternative offered, yet no attempt was made to bring this accident and its consequences to the attention of anyone in authority, apart from one letter to the housing officer and one letter to the NSPCC inspector, neither of which was followed up. Then, when Tom and John had been received into care, the former suffered a series of moves, consequent upon there being no arrangement for a child attending a boarding special school to return to the same place for each holiday. After making a request to head office, the area officer and her colleagues accepted without further protest the decision that it was not possible to make a permanent holiday arrangement. Head office might have taken refuge in the stock excuse of 'shortage of resources', but Miss Moss and her colleagues could easily have countered that argument by pointing out that resources were already being squandered, by subjecting to public care, children who would have been better off with their parents. When it comes to the second aspect of the workers' responsibility, namely conscientiousness, Miss Moss and her colleagues are seen

in a much better light. The following points do not exhaust the list of attributes which tell in their favour:

- 1 They had taken the trouble to get themselves properly trained for the job.
- 2 They stayed in the same post for several years, thus ensuring continuity of personal concern.
- 3 They were attentive to the expectations of the boys' mother; keeping her informed of their changes of address. (Unhappily, they did not show similar consideration for the father).
- 4 They took reasonable care to see that those who were looking after the boys day-by-day were kept in the picture.
- 5 Miss Moss and her colleagues, most commendably protested when it was decided to send John to the private boarding school for maladjusted children. They considered it unsuitable and made their views known, not only to the children's department head office but also to the education department. By so doing, they ran the risk of becoming unpopular and not being able to count upon co-operation from head office and from the education department in future.
- 6 They kept excellent records, by the standards of the times.

As regards the third measure of quality, namely the application of specific knowledge and experience to the child care task, the Curtis boys' area team do not show up so well. For example:

- 1 They failed to recognise and mobilise the potential of the older half brother who was, to some extent, a focal point in the boys' lives but could have been made a much more effective one.
- 2 Whereas they knew and approved of John's visits to his mother on the way to school in the mornings, they nevertheless recorded, " ... for some unknown reason John has been arriving late for school recently".
- 3 Far more seriously, they failed to connect John's repeated absences from school and from the children's home with the fact that he did not then know his mother's whereabouts. The relatives of John's schoolfriend showed much more understanding and sympathy than did the child care officers or the housemother. She actually inflicted corporal punishment (to which the child care officer did not demur) when he stayed out late, presumably looking for his mother.
- 4 They made no serious attempt to see that Tom was able to meet his mother and brothers when he was spending some days in the city with his Cornish foster parents. The foster mother's ambivalence was apparent in her letter.

If any assessment is to be made of the quality of casework in this large children's department, highly thought of by the inspectorate, it is that the child care workers showed commendable conscientiousness but they lacked concern about the socio-economic circumstances which unnecessarily caused deprivation of parental care and that they also failed to notice the relationship between people's behaviour and the circumstances which brought about such behaviour. Throughout John's recurrent bouts of soiling, no link was made with the frequent changes in care which preceded it. Turning from the particular to the general, it has already been noted that the children's officers themselves, presumably the elite of the profession, collectively showed little interest in those features of society which were associated with parental deprivation. Nor did they collectively show much interest in the study of human behaviour and motivation. These observations sum up both personal experience and impressions gained from study of the inspectors' reports. Child care workers showed varying degrees of conscientiousness. The Curtis boys were fortunate in having an area manager, field workers and group residential workers who were highly qualified and conscientious. On the macro view they showed little concern for the circumstances which brought children into care and tended to be unobservant of the factors affecting the behaviour of children and adults. It was only when a child's behaviour led to inconvenience (such as John's soiling and his running away and upsetting the police) that much notice was taken of him. Casework from 1948 to 1971 presents a bleak prospect which it would be unfair to judge by the standards of the nineteen-nineties.

14.10 CURTIS ON RECORDS

The Curtis Committee said, in paragraphs 124 to 128, that departments should keep records of all deprived children in their area, including those in voluntary

homes. They had looked at current records, bare facts and entries regarding health and concluded that no written information was generally given to those caring for the children, who were seldom found to be aware of the lack of information. Much material was held in offices and not communicated to staff.

14.11 RECORDS REQUIRED BY THE 1948 ACT

After the repeal of the poor law there were no statutory provisions governing records in children's homes. The 1946 rules continued to apply to boarded out children. The absence of notes on children in homes was remedied by the Administration of Children's Homes Regulations 1951. These provided, in subparagraph 5(vii), for the compilation of a medical record for each child but there was no requirement for it to be kept in the home. Many battles were raged between children's officers and medical officers over the custody of children's medical records. Under these regulations there was no requirement for regular reviews. The schedule provided for various record books to be kept, including a register of admissions and discharges and a 'log book' of important events. Some staff used this book imaginatively to record significant events concerning individual children. In 1955, new boarding out regulations required authorities to keep a register with basic particulars of every child boarded out in their area, whether by them or by another authority or voluntary organisation. Case records were to be made for every child boarded out or supervised and were to be preserved at least until the child's twenty-first birthday. The register was to be preserved for twenty-three years after the date of birth of the youngest child therein registered. Thus the original concern of the poor law minority to maintain a record paper for each child was restored and expanded for boarded out children in 1955. The single case study of Tom and John Curtis shows how, through their years in care, the medical records were never seen

by the people looking after the boys. The findings of the many medical, psychological and psychiatric examinations which they underwent were mere subjects of speculation by the day-to-day workers handling the Curtis boys.

14.12 RECORD KEEPING IN THE NEW DEPARTMENTS

In 1948, few boarding out visitors had the help of a typist. They typed their own reports or wrote them in longhand, often on forms designed to direct attention to points considered vital, such as a foster parents' description of a foster child's recent behaviour. Written records are a foundation for supervision, not a substitute for it. Authority 116 complained to the Home Office that the inspectors were more interested in the quality of the records than in the quality of the child care. However, the lack of careful recording caused irrevocable damage to some children and families, most notably in failure to record the identity and whereabouts of members of a child's family. Twenty years after being in care in the nineteen-sixties some were still seeking brothers and sisters of whom they had heard but could not trace. Local newspapers often printed stories of reunions between long lost parents and children, brothers and sisters and, sadly, other stories of similar searches which had proved unsuccessful. Loss of kin is only one aspect of poor recording. Most former child care officers have at least one horror story of the distress caused by inaccurate birth records. Children looking forward to leaving school have had to stay on for a year longer than they expected and others have gone through their schooling under the handicap of being supposedly a year older than they actually were. Some departments did not even bother to obtain the 'full' birth certificate of each child in long-term care. Belated examination of a birth certificate often revealed hitherto unknown significant facts about parentage and place as well as date of birth. The single case study of the Curtis Family shows how John Curtis'

multiple medical disabilities were never discussed at reviews with first hand study of written records, but only second or third hand, based upon what the person who escorted John to the clinic happened to glean and remember from casual conversation with clinic staff. A medical record 'RHM' was supposed to be kept for every child in group care and a medical report was supposed to be obtained from the general practitioners for every boarded out child at regular intervals and kept in the children's department. Apart from the basic information, the main preoccupation of recordkeepers in the early years was to ensure that visits to foster homes were recorded. As late as 1965, inspectors were urging workers to visit foster homes without notice, presumably in the expectation that they might catch the foster parents red-handed in some malpractice. Later the ordinary courtesies began to be observed and a prior telephone call made to ensure that a visit would be convenient. Of course fewer foster homes were on the phone in the nineteen forties and fifties than in later years.

14.13 PROCESS RECORDING

In the late nineteen fifties the practice of 'process recording' was introduced into the training of social workers. The student was asked to write a very detailed account of a visit, or an interview, to use as material for discussion with the teacher or supervisor. One unfortunate result of this otherwise useful innovation was that some students later came to think that there was merit in continuing to write lengthy descriptions of their contacts with people in the course of their ordinary work. Sometimes these were never seen by anyone except the person who typed them. Some social workers did not even read the typed copies of what they had dictated. Overlong reports are counter productive. In fulltime work, the effort spent in preparing them would be better

used to make a taut analysis to better understanding of each event rather than by reeling off descriptions which obscured the essentials. Lengthy descriptions also confused those who needed to study the record later on. The expression, 'write-up', was freely used in the nineteen fifties and even repeatedly featured in a television programme purporting to depict child care officers in action. Social workers were shown dictating to their tape recorders the 'write-ups' of visits and other events which had taken place much earlier. The 'write-up' could become a ritual dissociated from the social work which it was supposed to record. It is extraordinary that doctors, lawyers, journalists and police officers are expected to record their observations contemporaneously, in their own handwriting, whereas it was acceptable for social workers to write up their work some time later. Inspectors' reports and personal experience confirms that a 'write-up' might be dictated weeks after the event, leaving scope for embroidery as well as for simple slips of memory. The 'write up' did not originate with the practice of 'process recording'. It began with the poor law, when visitors to boarded out children were required to present written reports to boarding out committees. From 1948 it flourished as children's departments evolved forms on which visitors to boarded out children could record their findings. It was proper that the form should, for example, contain a question, "was the child seen on this occasion?", and that it should provide a space for a description of the conditions in the foster home and the attitude and feelings expressed by the child and the foster family. An unsuccessful attempt was made in Authority 015, in the nineteen sixties, to use initials instead of typing out the full name of a person each time it appeared in the narrative, but professional caseworkers rejected this proposal on the grounds that it diminished the dignity of the persons described. At the simplest level, failure to communicate accurately might result in minor disasters; such as children arriving at a remote

railway or coach station with no-one to meet them; or parents missing opportunities to attend at significant events in their children's lives. One test of the conscientiousness of a department's work would be whether fail-safe systems were routinely applied, so that messages required acknowledgement to ensure that they had been received and would be acted upon. People now have access to personal records. This transformed the practice of recordkeeping.

14.14 COMMUNICATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Communication in child care was bedevilled by issues of confidentiality. Long after children's departments were finished, the London boroughs' children's regional planning committee was recommending, for example, that schools should be given the bare minimum of information about the antecedents of children in care. How often practitioners took refuge in confidentiality, either to cover their own deficiencies or to retain power by withholding information. The test is not to be applied by rule of thumb. It depends upon whether imparting information seems to be in the interests of the child and his family. While much damage has been done by broadcasting irresponsible judgments, responsible sharing of fact and opinion may be calculated to help others in the child's interests.

14.15 CASEWORK IN THE 'PREVENTIVE' FIELD

That, which later came to be called 'preventive' work, was emphatically mentioned by the Curtis Committee, in paragraph 7. They thought that it laid outside their terms of reference. A grave result of splitting the care of children away from other functions of the authorities was that children's committees became powerless to help families in ways which had been open to public assistance committees under the poor law. First, the responsibility for income

maintenance was taken from local government and vested in the National Assistance Board. Secondly, the responsibility for homeless families was vested in the welfare committees. Thirdly, the responsibility for housing continued to be vested in housing committees and not, as it became in the nineteen nineties in Bexley and Harrow and elsewhere, in a corporate directorate with social services. This fragmentation of responsibilities led to early demands for complementary powers for children's committees.

14.16 CALLS FOR MORE POWERS TO DIMINISH NEED FOR PUBLIC CARE

Less than three years after the Children Act 1948, the Association of Children's Officers had identified the need for power to spend money on 'prevention'. In a report dated 3 March 1951, the association recommended that Section 1 of the Children Act should be amended to empower local authorities to incur expenditure:

- a In pursuance of their duty under Sub-Section 1(3), to secure that care is taken over by a parent, guardian, relative or friend, in suitable cases and
- b to secure in appropriate cases that a child shall not become in need of reception into care.

Twelve years passed before this proposal reached the statute book. Meanwhile child care workers found that, in applying ordinary social work principles, they might be seriously hampered in their endeavours to avert the need for reception into care. The main causes of avoidable admissions to care were failures of other agencies, notably some local authority housing and welfare departments and the unwillingness of national assistance board officers to use their full powers. Other moves for improved prevention came from representations of an informal group, chaired by Mrs Fisher (whose husband was archbishop of Canterbury), 'The Fisher Group', and the recommendations of the Ingleby Committee ⁰⁷⁷.

14.17 THE IMPACT OF SECTION 1 OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS ACT
1963

Section 1 laid a duty on local authorities to:

" ... make available such advice, guidance and assistance as may promote the welfare of children by diminishing the need to receive children into or keep them in care or to bring children before the courts ... "

On 17 September 1963, Home Office circular 204/63 introduced the powers and duties under Section 1. The Home Secretary said that progress made with the remedial aspects of child care since the war should now be matched by progress in preventive action.

"He is confident that the efforts required to achieve such progress will be repaid by the saving in suffering and insecurity to the children themselves, by the saving to the community in crime and maladjustment among its future citizens and by saving in the cost of the child care service itself."

The order in which these desirable ends were set out in the circular were unexceptionable and it was unfair of a distinguished writer on child care to say:

"We had brought a measure of increased happiness to the children in care. What we hadn't stopped to consider was how they managed to get there in the first place ... But we'd only taken a few cautious steps in this direction when Whitehall seized upon the development with glee: here was an even better and even cheaper way of caring for children, so cheap it didn't cost anything! Don't care for them at all!"

A lot of child care workers rightly hailed the development with glee, because they hated the avoidable removal of children from their homes and were distressed to see the deprivation experienced by a proportion of the thousands of children growing up in approved schools, special boarding schools, children's homes and precarious foster care. The sad tale of the Curtis boys, set out in the single case study, epitomises the monstrous unhappiness and lifelong destruction of personality imposed upon children by avoidable reception into care. If, at the same time, the demand on the rate and tax payer was also

diminished by preventing admissions, that meant that there was more money to provide services for those who actually needed substitute care. Home Office circular 160/48 emphasised that it was important to do everything possible to save children from suffering the misfortune of being deprived of normal home life. The first aim was to keep the family together and separation of a child from its parents could only be justified when there was no possibility of securing adequate care in the child's own home. The purpose of Section 1 of the 1963 act was not to supersede arrangements made since 1949 for co-ordinating preventive work, but, "local authorities have felt the need for express statutory authority to perform such work and to meet any consequent expenditure". Paragraph 5 said, "hitherto there has been no statutory focus of responsibility for ensuring that action was taken to give timely and effective help", when there was a risk of children having to be received into care or committed to care. Reception into care, might of itself, sometimes have a certain preventive value. Reception of one or more children for a period might enable a family to cope better and thus preserve a home to which children might be eventually restored. It was not intended that the power to give material assistance should be used to provide an alternative to national assistance. Continuing payments under Section 1 would have to be taken into account when assessing the amount of national assistance grant to which the parent was entitled. The authority could, under Section 1, make contributions towards the expense incurred by housing authorities in providing accommodation for families, as well as for services which might help to prevent eviction. The Ingleby Committee had examined the possibility of creating 'family advice centres', where members of the public could get advice or assistance on the welfare of children. It should not, however, invariably be necessary, even in the largest authorities, to establish separate 'advice centres'. Existing area offices of children's departments might

be ready to offer advice on family problems. "Such centres will also be of value in assisting families or individuals where no question arises of children going into care and where indeed no children may be involved".

14.18 IMPLEMENTING SECTION 1

Before their duties and powers relating to 'preventive' work were reformulated in 1963, children's departments had shown marked diversity in the degree of energy and imagination with which they had conducted these tasks. Some authorities (and some inspectors) seemed to hail the new legislation as a millenary event: others saw it as giving formal recognition to current social work practice with the additional advantage that cash, which had previously had to be wrung out of the national assistance or out of other departments of the authority or from charities, could now be provided by the children's committee. Some envisaged a new proactive duty to go out and seek new recipients of attention from children's department social workers: others remained simply reactive during their service to those whose children were presented, either in person or by other agencies, as candidates for reception into care or for investigation as to their need for care, protection or control. Some saw 'preventive work' as a specialist function calling for a different kind of approach from the social worker, others saw it as the ordinary task of the child care officer, if not indeed of the relieving officer and the school attendance officer who faced the same needs before 1948. This may have reflected differing socio-economic circumstances in different circumstances in different communities. Some authorities served a high proportion of people suffering from poverty and poor housing, others mainly served relatively affluent populations, although even the richest and best educated populations had some constituents who, through disadvantages such as disability were unable, without social work intervention,

to care for their children in an acceptable way. Study of the inspectors' reports gives the impression that the intensity of activity leading up to and following the implementation of Section 1, was largely determined by the attitude of individual children's officers, falling broadly into two groups:

- 1 those welcoming 'prevention' as a discrete activity not hitherto sanctioned by law and therefore new and exciting;
- 2 those whose current practice was based on Section 1 of the 1948 act which forbade the reception of a child into care unless it was necessary in the interests of his welfare and required the authority to try to get his care taken over by a parent, guardian, relative or friend.

Those in the second group saw 'preventive' work as complying with their duties under previously existing law. They generally welcomed the additional powers to give assistance in kind or cash. Most children's officers used the new act as a reason for asking their authorities for more staff and more money. Such was the interest that, in one region of the Association of Children's Officers (South Wales and South West England), discussion on implementing the act afforded the only occasion during the twenty-two years' existence of the regional branch, at which there was one hundred percent attendance, all seventeen members from Cardiganshire to Cornwall turning up to the meeting to discuss it.

14.19 A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE TO THE 1963 ACT

A striking example of an elaborate response made to the 1963 act is presented by Authority 088, with about 100 children in care in 1964. The inspectors' reports are summarised below:

"The children's officer of this small authority, with under 100,000 population, persuaded the children's committee to set up a 'family advice centre' and the committee now believes that they are pioneers. Two 'welfare officer' posts were transferred from other departments and a new senior family caseworker post, on salary grade APT III was created. The two welfare officer posts were re-designated 'family caseworker' and paid on the child care officer

scale. There were four applicants for the senior post, none suitable, so the children's officer would co-ordinate the work in person. There were 140 applicants for the caseworker posts. No women were interviewed. Three men (two of whom were over 45 years old) were appointed, none apparently with qualifications. One had worked for an occupational welfare charity; one with a religious social welfare service and one was an education welfare officer. One extra clerk was also appointed. The children's officer intended to establish the family advice service separately from the children's department but it was eventually set up within the department's premises, with the title altered to 'The Family Advice Centre and Children's Department'. In consequence of these additional posts and appointments, the establishment of the department became:

- 1 children's officer (child care certificate)
- 1 deputy children's officer
- 2 child care officers
- 3 family caseworkers
- 4 clerical officers"

The four clerical officers were all women. The remaining staff of seven comprised five men and two women. The senior clerk was required to conduct the first telephone enquiries and the first interviews with applicants, assisting with form filling for pensions and national assistance and referring to other appropriate agencies without attempting 'casework'. Those needing the attention of a caseworker were referred immediately if one was available; otherwise an appointment was made to see a caseworker later. Caseworkers provided the senior clerk with their timetable of movements and they phoned in to the office twice a day. The children's officer and deputy dealt with emergencies which could not await the attention of the family caseworkers. The numbers in care had decreased by 12% between March 1964 and November 1965. In the twelve months preceding 30 November 1965, the number of families was 151, comprising 609 children. The annual number of visits by family caseworkers was 1,800, each caseworker having 600. Clothing was provided in 90 instances and furniture or bedding in 40. Rent, amounting to £300, was collected by caseworkers and paid in. The total of cash assistance under Section 1, in twelve months, was just under £120, of which nearly £50 had been repaid by the time the report was

prepared for the Home Office. Examination of the family caseworkers' reports showed a good commonsense approach with emphasis on clearing debts and budgeting. Several families had been supported during breakdown in effectiveness of the father who, it was said, " ... had eventually been restored to a sense of responsibility."

14.20 THE FIRST NINE MONTHS' WORK UNDER SECTION 1

Home Office circular 102/65, dated 7 May 1965, summarised the report received from local authorities on the arrangements made by them, covering the period from 1 October 1963 to 31 July 1964:

"A small number of authorities had taken no special measure to implement Section 1 because they considered that their established arrangements were adequate. Most authorities had however reported redoubled efforts, for example by increasing field staff, strengthening links between local authority services and with voluntary organisations and preparing schemes for making assistance in kind or in cash available. In a small number of authorities the children's committee had been made directly responsible for specific provision which would ordinarily have been provided by another committee (for example, accommodation for homeless families). One authority had transferred the 'problem families case committee' from housing to the children's committee. In many instances the children's department had set up and maintained a central index of 'problem families' into which information was fed by statutory and voluntary agencies. Several authorities had created posts in the children's department of the 'home help' variety. These were the precursors of officers who were subsequently to be nicknamed 'flying angels', 'homemakers' or 'family aides'. Other developments were casework with families in specially provided accommodation, 'seeking the allocation of a house by the housing authority', rent and fuel guarantees and schemes of delegation authorising the grant of assistance in kind, or in exceptional circumstances, in cash. A substantial minority of authorities was planning to set up 'advice centres'. Most authorities giving assistance in cash stipulated that it should be given in connection with preventive or rehabilitation work and that every precaution should be taken to avoid giving the recipient any impression that the children's department was another national assistance board. Some authorities ran stores of secondhand furniture and household goods and others paid rent to voluntary organisations for premises used for this purpose."

The report concluded with a heading 'Juvenile Delinquency'. There was a fairly general strengthening of liaison with police and probation departments but,

surprisingly, only in a few authorities had co-operation been developed with the director of education over juvenile court proceedings for non-attendance at school. A long appendix listed special developments or experiments which had been inaugurated under Section 1. These included respite holidays, foam mattresses for enuretics, training schemes for parents in day or residential settings, good neighbours, meals on wheels for under-fives, debt counselling (with assistance from the chief clerk of the county court and a member of the treasurer's department) and agencies for early identification for families at risk (including consultations with housing authorities over possible eviction, with the fuel authority where services were likely to be cut off, with the education department where families risked court action for irregular attendance and with police where parents charged with offences likely to result in sentence or imprisonment). Out of nearly fifty different services which were described, nearly all could have been provided from statutory sources existing before 1963. An obvious example was 'short-stay as a means of relieving family tension'. Resident home helps could have been provided by health committees and rent and fuel guarantees could have been obviated by more efficient collection and arranging for direct payments from the National Assistance Board and by thief-proof coin meters. A striking entry related to a 'special scheme' for placing babies direct from maternity hospitals into previously approved adoptive homes. All babies were seen by the professor of health at six months, when he assessed their development. In twelve months, 76 newborn babies were placed in this way, thus preventing their remaining indefinitely in care. A chilling entry read, "children sent to boarding school to avoid their coming into care". It is to be hoped that adequate arrangements were made for the school holidays. In the end there was practically nothing in the list which could not have been done before 1963 by some statutory agency except 'provision of a sewing machine for loan to

mothers', and a rent guarantee to a parent occupying privately-owned property who was not in receipt of supplementary benefit. All the other projects listed need not have been funded from Section 1 if the other agencies had been willing to exercise their powers. The lesson from this report is that the duty to promote the child's welfare made more departments look at ways in which they could develop and expand existing resources. It seems that most child care workers felt they were onto something new. A few saw the new act as an encouragement and a justification for doing things which could have been done before the act was passed.

14.21 RECORDS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A test of the competence of any social work department is the quality of the system for keeping individual records. This is particularly important when dealing with children away from home, because they, the younger they are, are the least likely to know their own histories and relationships. The Minority Report of the Royal Commission of 1908 had emphasised the importance of the casepaper system. The poor law code had required that an order for the admission of a child to a home should, in addition to the usual details, say "whether the child is an orphan, deserted or illegitimate child" and should state the respective religious creeds of the father and mother; and the name and address of the nearest known relative or friend ²⁵⁵. Thereafter the superintendent of the home was, by article 85, to keep a health record for each child on which the medical officer or nurse was to enter examination and treatment. This was to be forwarded if the child moved elsewhere. Article 42 required that a record paper in statutory form ('Form 4'), was to be maintained for an 'infant' in a workhouse nursery. Artificial feeding had to be noted since the code said that a child under 18 months was not to be weaned except on the

written directions of the medical officer. This meant of course that the mother was not free to leave unless she took the infant with her.

14.22 RECORDS OF COMMITTED CHILDREN

Different provisions governed the record of a child committed by a court to an authority's care or to an approved school. As its nickname implies, the 'fit person' order did not start as a means of invoking municipal care but to entrusting a child to some person with whom he was probably already acquainted. An example is the 'adoption' of Oliver Twist by Mr Brownlow ¹⁰². A local education authority could, before 1948, decline to have a child committed to their care. Committing children encroached gradually into the functions of such authorities. There were never any 'Local Authorities (Fit Person) Rules' governing the process, only those relating to boarding out. Before 1948 it was required that each child committed to the care of a local education authority should be boarded out as soon as possible ¹⁸⁵. The ordinary group residential provision for such a child was an approved school, even for a child under the age of ten, if for any reason, **including the want of a fit person of his own religious persuasion**, the court was satisfied that he could not suitably **be dealt with otherwise** (emphasis added). The order had simply to state the age and religious persuasion of the child and the name and address of any person (including the putative father if he was ordered to pay towards maintenance). Authority 080 inherited a committal order, made before 1948, which had a name and address written in pencil on the back. This turned out to be that of an interested grandparent who had attended the court proceedings. On the other hand, heads and managers of approved schools got a better service. A court had to furnish a comprehensive record of information about the child in prescribed form. This went into details of leisure occupations, the parents' attitudes and

the names and addressed of any others interested: a model for its time. After a system of classification and a central pool of vacancies was established and introduced by a Home Office letter, dated 29 October 1942, the importance of comprehensive records was heightened. Home Office Circular 867,973/12 of 18 May 1943, commented on the meagre contents of some of the records received from the courts, quoting as examples entries such as 'in need of care or protection'. "This", said the Home Office, "leaves the department very much in the dark". Pity they had not noticed much earlier the need for courts to give similar information to fit persons to whose care they committed children. All children committed to a council's care were supposed to be boarded out and the statutory provision for records of such children was contained in the Children & Young Persons (Boarding Out) Rules 1946. Provisions in similar terms were made under the poor law on the same date. These rules called for written reports as to the suitability of a potential foster home (Rule 11) and for a written report after each visit to a boarded out child.

14.23 SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF CASEWORK

The anomaly whereby about a tenth of all children in public care were separately committed to the managers of approved schools, derived from its origins of the approved school system. This system proceeded upon its idiosyncratic way for over a century, until it was ended by the Children & Young Persons Act 1969. The schools then became 'community homes with education' under the direct control of local authorities or of a managements upon which local authorities were strongly represented. In future the youngsters were all to be committed to the direct care of local authorities, who would be free to care for them in community homes or in any other mode of care. Before 1969, the casework so essential to the care of this, the most seriously disturbed group of adolescents, was the

responsibility of the managers of whichever approved schools the youngsters had been sent; not only while they were living in the school but for three or more years after being released on licence. These schools were scattered all over the country, generally miles away from the child's family and from the district to which he would ordinarily expect to be licensed. In December 1960 for example, Kent County Council had 358 children spread over 78 different schools; more than half of all the approved schools in England and Wales. Entry to, and departure from a school was not, until 1971, governed by the individual child's circumstances but by the happenstances of court hearings and adjournments and the rigidity of the Approved School Rules ¹⁸⁷. These rules prevented managers from releasing a child until he had served at least a year in the school, regardless of the time spent in remand. There was provision for the Home Secretary to approve a shorter period, but managers did not usually bother to apply because the time to reply might well exceed the unexpired portion of the minimum period. Approved schools showed no urgent enthusiasm to adopt the family-centred approach and the social work principles which characterised the better exponents of the new child care services. Devoted, compassionate and thoughtful as were many of the heads and staff, they saw themselves in the main as running boarding schools for non-achievers, bent on building sound characters and wholesome habits and engaging in the incessant struggle to maintain order and discipline among large numbers of disrupted children accumulated under one roof. It was necessary to get a court order before a youngster in the care of a local authority could be transferred to an approved school. The procedure depended upon whether there was a fit person order or whether the child was in the care of an authority under the Children Act. In the first case, Sub-Section 84(8) of the 1933 act enabled an authority, who was of the opinion that a child under seventeen should go to an approved school, to apply to the juvenile court. The

court could, if it was desirable in the child's interests, order him to be sent to a school. If the child was in care under Section 1 of the 1948 act, the local authority was required, under Section 65 of the 1933 act, as amended, to satisfy the court that he was 'refractory' and that it was expedient that he should be sent to an approved school. Conversely, transfers from an approved school to the local authority child care system, could be effected under Sub-Section 6(4) of the Children Act. It gave to local authorities a power (not a duty) to receive a child into their care, provided the managers agreed. Sub-paragraph 6(4)[b] required that the child should still remain in the care of the managers. Something over a hundred children were, in an average year, transferred under this provision. In practice it did not seem to occasion the disputes and misunderstandings which might have been expected from shared responsibilities. As a rule, the managers were only too pleased to have the local authority taking day-to-day responsibility. Managers had to make adequate arrangements for after care. A series of Home Office circulars, dated 5.5.31, 12.12.42 and 3.11.48, defined the circumstances in which managers might pay weekly grants for those licensed from the school. The arrangements for supervision of licencees and supervisees were set out prior to the formation of the children's departments by two further circulars dated 12.3.41 and 1.5.48. Fulltime approved school welfare officers were to be appointed to serve large centres of population. Arrangements were to be made for visiting youngsters living in places not covered by welfare officers. The duties of committees specified under Sub-Section 39(1) of the 1948 act did not include the provision of after care or licence from approved schools, unless exceptionally, he or she came from a school which the authority managed. Not until 1952 were children's committees empowered, by Section 7 of the Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1952, to 'advise, befriend and assist' children on behalf of the managers of approved schools.

In 1955 the Home Office issued a memorandum on the after care of youngsters from approved schools ¹⁷³. Paragraph 1 said that the personal influence created during training should not come to an end with the termination of residence. Those who had prepared boys and girls to regain their place in society should have a continuing responsibility to help them in the process of readjustment to the world outside the school. Statutory responsibility for after care rested on the school managers under whose care the child remained during licence and supervision. Licence lasted until the date up to which the young person legally be detailed. Supervision lasted for three more years unless the young person had earlier reached the age of twenty-one. The managers could, at any time after the first year, licence a youngster to live with his parents or other suitable person. The managers had to see that the youngster was visited, advised and befriended and given assistance, including financial help, if they saw fit, to maintain himself and find employment. They were required to place in a hostel or in lodgings any youngster whose own home was unsuitable. All the rights and powers of parents were vested in the managers. When a youngster was home on licence, the parents were required to exercise their powers so as to assist the managers. Social work provision for something like 20,000 children, at any one time in the schools or out on licence or supervision, was a massive social work task not helped by the remoteness of many schools from the youngsters' own homes and by the absence of teams of social workers to assist the managers and heads in the performance of their duties. It must be difficult for present day local authority social workers to envisage how that part of their duties, which now absorbs so much of their time, energy and resources, could have been shouldered by the ragged network of approved school welfare officers, each responsible to numerous sets of managers spread countrywide over England and Wales. Some schools had one or two of the 'welfare officers' attached to them.

Heads and deputies travelled heroic distances to visit their licencees. One or two large authorities, like the London County Council, specifically employed men as approved school after care officers. Subject to the school managers' approval, these men worked with any boys in their area who were on licence. Paragraph 8 of the memorandum said that managers could control a child on licence but it was doubtful if they could control a youngster subject to supervision except by recalling him for compulsory residence. This power of recall was sanctioned if a youngster failed to stay and work in the place to which he had been licensed. This was the 'revolving door' syndrome, later characteristic of adult psychiatric patients. Every child should have 'an understanding with someone living nearby on whom he could rely'. Children's authorities were generally prepared to exercise their powers under the 1952 act. By 1954, local authority officers were appointed as after care agents for 19% of the boys and 50% of the girls placed out from the schools ²¹⁵. There are no records available of the numbers of youngsters who were out on licence or under supervision from approved schools at any one time. They were usually licensed sometime before they were liable to be kept in the schools. The average length of stay in the schools was less than three years. Supervision ordinarily lasted for three years. There must have been more out on licence or under supervision than were resident in the schools at any one time. The proportion of cases which the local authority was appointed to supervise increased as did the proportion of those resident in the schools. By 1964, the Home Office was also counting the number of youngsters still living in the schools for whom the local authorities were already appointed as after care agents. Table 14.24 shows how the responsibilities of local authorities slowly increased in the next eight years.

**TABLE 14.23 Persons Subject to Approved School Orders
England & Wales : 1957 to 1966**

	Resident in School	Resident and on Local Authority Caseload	Released and Supervised by Local Authority
31 March 1957	7,119	-----	2,380
31 March 1964	8,823	1,846	2,351
31 March 1965	8,843	3,068	2,849
31 March 1966	8,648	3,769	3,340

The approved school heads were not averse to youngsters, under school leaving age, being assimilated into the local authority care system. The local authorities did not press to take over the residents in senior schools. Root-and-branch reform was not affected until the 1969 act made virtually all juvenile courts' custodial orders, except detention centre orders, into care orders and replaced the schools by 'community homes with education'. It is easy to imagine the feelings of officers before the 1969 changes. They were expected to supervise youngsters who were in the care of distant, unseen managers and not of their own employing committees. Heroic work was done in a proportion of cases. The child care officers' association estimated that a girl on licence from an approved school should count four times as heavily as an ordinary boarded out child in a weighting system for measuring caseloads. Inspectors recorded instances in which child care officers claimed never to have seen the Home Office memorandum of guidance. Inspectors noted a degree of dissociation from the interest of approved school managers. Horror stories abounded, like the one in Authority 015 where a child care officer, in good faith, reported blandly on a boy who had already been recalled to the school for misbehaviour. In a personal communication, an approved school head described the reluctance of a child care officer to respond to a request from a school to visit the parents of their

resident, saying, "I must get on with my own work" ⁹. Present day social workers, struggling mainly with the problems of disturbed adolescents, would be surprised at the detached way in which some local authorities treated after care responsibilities (which the authority was not, of course, even obliged to undertake).

14.24 CASEWORK WITH FAMILIES OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF HARM

Not long after children's departments were first formed, anxious voices were raised about the plight of children who might be left at risk in their own homes. Eighty years earlier, the first professional glimpse of what was later to be called 'the battered baby syndrome' had been recorded by Dr Authol Johnson, at Great Ormonde Street Hospital, who noticed children with frequently repeated fractures. He attributed the cause to rickets. On 20 July 1950, the Home Secretary told parliament that inter-departmental consultations and a working party had reported that the government had decided that there was no present need to change the law. The powers of existing statutory agencies, backed up by voluntary resources, were adequate provided they were effectively co-ordinated. Councils would be asked to make suitable arrangements. Accordingly, on 31 July 1950, the Home Secretary and the Ministers of Education and Health issued a circular suggesting that each authority should appoint an officer to co-ordinate the activities of the appropriate agencies ²⁴⁵. It said that five committees of the council and also the National Assistance Board and voluntary organisations had powers to assist families so as to avoid the enforced removal of children from their homes. In some authorities there was competition among chief officers to be selected as the co-ordinating officer. Some foresaw that they would be in a better position to influence decisions if they were not cast in the role of chair. As one children's officer said, "It is better to be Prime Minister

than to be the Speaker of the House of Commons". In 1951 the executive council of the Association of Children's Officers adopted, as the association's policy, a document calling for the law to be amended to enable local authorities to use public funds to assist families so as to enable children to be restored to their homes or to prevent their being received into care. In 1952 the association published a pamphlet on cruelty to children⁰⁰⁷. In the same year parliament passed the Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act of which Section 1 amended the definition of neglect to exclude the word 'wilful'. Section 2 laid a duty on the children's committee to cause enquiry to be made into any suggestion that a person under seventeen might be in need of care or protection.

14.25 CONSULTATION BEFORE COURT PROCEEDINGS

Home Office circular 22/64 of 22 January 1964, said that chief constables had been asked to consult informally with children's departments before bringing any children or young persons before the court as being in need of care, protection or control and similarly to consult when children under the age of twelve were charged with an offence. This was to ensure that the agency told the court of any factors where the institution of proceedings would affect any preventive work. Chief constables were asked to inform children's officers of any conviction for incest with a person of any age, any sexual offence against a child mentioned in Schedule 1 of the 1933 act, and any conviction for cruelty or ill-treatment. The local authority would be informed by the Home Office of the earliest possible date on which an offender, sentenced to imprisonment, might be released. On request, the Home Office would also state when such a person was about to have home leave or be released. This was often achieved at local level in the counties. Sometimes the interests and wishes of the two sides were diametrically opposed. Examples were when a social worker was trying to keep

an approved school licensee at home and the police wanted to rid their manor of trouble by having him recalled. Another cause of friction occurred when police had repeatedly received public complaints about families with problems and wanted the authority to receive the child into care. At one case conference a senior police officer was asked, "Have you ever thought what happens to children received into care?". He replied, "It's no business of mine, once I know they are safe". These commonplace features of casework involving other agencies give point to the aphorism, "Successful child care is an exercise in public relations".

14.26 ATTITUDES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A hundred years ago, there had been strong parliamentary resistance to legal measures to control the way in which parents managed their children. The great humanitarian, Lord Shaftesbury, opposed the first statutes to protect children from cruelty in their own homes. It was traditional before 1948 and for some years afterwards that neither the police nor any kind-hearted onlooker should interfere in violent quarrels between husband and wife. Thus a warm-hearted clergyman, St John Groser who was deeply interested in social affairs, wrote of experience in a slum parish before the First World War ⁰³⁷:

"The only thing we were not expected to do was to interfere between husbands and wives. That was an unwarranted intrusion in a family affair, which resulted as often as not in both turning on the intruder. There were many such rules and conventions which had to be learned, for that society was governed by them."

The author did not imply that this convention was outdated by 1951.

14.27 'BATTERED BABIES'

British child care circles in the nineteen-fifties and sixties were, in the main, reluctant to acknowledge the evidence for widespread physical abuse of children

which began to be noticed by Caffey, in the United States, from 1946 onwards
049. Some children's officers discounted the horror stories put out by the NSPCC, believing them to be highlighted to attract charitable contributions. It was not until 1962 that the 'battered baby syndrome' was widely discussed, at first in the United States. Ruth and Henry Kempe published an article describing the syndrome and presenting, for the first time, estimates of its incidence in that country ²⁶⁹. In November 1966, Mrs Barbara Kahan, editor of the Bulletin of the Association of Children's Officers, took official cognisance of non-accidental injury to children. In her first editorial she wrote:

"Concerning one very serious and recently recognised problem, the syndrome of the 'battered baby', it has become clear that some members may find themselves handicapped in dealing with it by lack of personal experience of such cases amongst solicitors, general practitioners and others on whom the children's officer is dependent for co-operation in diagnosis and action."

The editor suggested that members should send any descriptions of cases which they had to deal with in the course of their own work. The next bulletin published several accounts, including a report from Richmond:

"The Richmond case concerned a couple in their early twenties, both intelligent and well-educated. The man had been in holy orders. They had been married for four years when their eighteen-month-old child suffered a ruptured bowel. There was a previous history of a fractured skull. In reply to the police, the mother made a statement thought to be a confession. The Director of Public Prosecution advised against prosecuting. A juvenile court found the child to be in need of care, protection or control and made a supervision order. At twenty-six months old, the child was in hospital for a scald on the leg. A week later she was in hospital again with a fractured leg. The mother told an unconvincing story of accidents and later changed her story. The police were informed but did not prosecute. The child was committed to care. Another child was born and the authority offered to receive it into care but the mother declined and there was no case to bring the child before the court. At three months the younger child sustained a fractured skull and was brought to court and committed to care. The parents were charged and a psychiatrist told the court that they were both mentally disturbed. A High Court judge made a probation order."

Richmond had discovered a classic case: an outwardly respectable couple who denied responsibility for repeated injuries to their children.

Children's departments ended in 1971 and some time was to pass before the holocaust of **sexual** abuse of children came to light. This is not to say that sexual abuse was previously unknown. Within the first two years of the children's department in Authority 080, there were three such cases. The first was a girl of fourteen who made allegations against her stepfather. She was committed to care and spent a few months in a children's home before becoming self-supporting. There was insufficient evidence to prosecute the stepfather. The second was a girl of three whose mother was dead and who had been repeatedly indecently assaulted by the father's elderly neighbour. He was convicted and put on probation. The girl was committed to care and boarded out. The third instance involved a widower who committed suicide when the police enquired about his incestuous relationships with his three schoolgirl daughters. They were committed to care and boarded out together with relatives. These events were the unhappy miseries unfolded day-by-day in the juvenile courts. The stock procedure was committal to care followed by boarding out or a long stay in group care. Little thought was given to the child's understanding of what was going on. Discussion with the child of such issues was a field of casework from which many social workers shrank. Unless children were capable of framing the relevant questions, they were generally left in the dark with their fantasies, probably being told, "You are here because the court said you must come here". In another personal communication, the headteacher of Ryall's Court Approved school reported that the folklore among the girls was that the school had acquired its name because it was, " ... something to do with the court". It was not widely realised in children's departments that little boys, as well as big boys and girls of every age, were the victims of silence and widespread denial of such abuse. It was to become the preoccupation of child protection agencies

in the mid-seventies, some time after the period under review in this study. Even now, the incidence of maltreatment of children defies analysis. In 1979 a report, published in France, following a year's research, concluded that child abuse arouses so much shame that it is kept secret, making its incidence impossible to estimate. Counting the cases which come to court measures a fraction of the total. The traditional image of the drunken working class father with a desperately worried and nervous mother was not always typical. Children were equally at risk at any social level but mistreatment was more readily detected in poor families. The families were often known to the **assistants sociales**, although the mistreatment might still go undetected. Practitioners can now recall some puzzling behaviour by quite small children. For example, repeated running away from home by little children almost as soon as they could walk, was routinely dealt with by returning them to their parents with virtually no questions asked. It now seems likely that much unexplained disturbed behaviour, puzzling to teachers, children's officers, child guidance clinics and police, had its roots in sexual abuse which the children were frightened to disclose. It took forty years, from Curtis to Cleveland, for local authority social workers to attain their current level of alertness to the immense toll of suffering and degradation to which generations of children were to be subjected in that period.

DIAGRAM 5.
ANNUAL RATE
AND GRANT BORNE EXPENDITURE PER THOUSAND
POPULATION: CHILDREN'S COMMITTEES ENGLAND AND WALES



SERVICE DEVELOPMENT CHART
 Children's Committees' Expenditure
 England and Wales 1949 to 1962



APPROVED SCHOOL
Girls at Ryalls Court School 1960

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CURTIS FULFILLED?

"It is not in our view possible in visits of this type to estimate the individual handling or to be sure that children are not misunderstood or even harshly treated. This would involve much more prolonged visits, and the use of other sources of evidence. Subject to this we think that the physical care of children reached a much more satisfactory standard than the development of the child's whole personality, though the two cannot of course be separated. The worst Homes were often bad from both standpoints. As we have already seen, good social habits cannot easily be acquired in crowded, ill-equipped and poorly repaired rooms nor can the child develop the capacity to care for himself in such conditions."

The Curtis Report
Paragraph 207

15. 1 THE QUESTION

To what extent were the intentions of the committee achieved? Curtis was asked:

"... to consider what further measures should be taken to ensure that these children are brought up under conditions best calculated to compensate them for the lack of parental care".

Paragraph 427 said that the committee's objectives were to provide that each child in care should enjoy:

- i "affection and understanding
- ii "stability, the feeling that he can expect to remain with those who will continue to care for him till he goes out into the world on his own feet
- iii "opportunity to make the best of his ability and aptitudes
- iv "a share in the common life of a small group of people in a homely environment "

Before 1948, some children being maintained by public assistance committees, and other children committed to the care of education authorities were already, to an extent, enjoying some of these benefits. After 1948, children in care had a better chance of getting (i) more affection and understanding and (iii) better opportunities to make the best of themselves. The verdicts on the other two conclusions are less certain. As to (ii), stability, the hideous tale told in the case study of the Curtis Family, of John Curtis who, during eight years in care went on twenty occasions to a new place with total strangers, is probably not untypical of the experiences of a significant minority of the children. Recalling that John's area officer and her child care officers were fully qualified and stayed for years in the same post and that the authority was well-regarded by the inspectors, who made few criticisms of its standards of care, it is unlikely that John's was an isolated experience. In mitigation, it should be remembered that less than a tenth of children coming into care confirmed to the stereotype of 'growing up in care'. For ten children who joined the child care train, a least nine got off before it reached the terminus. How many of these ten need have had to hazard the journey at all is another question which has been discussed in chapter 7. Curtis envisaged a childhood spent growing up in one foster home or in one group home. That leaves us with Curtis' last requirement, (iv), a share in the common life of a small group of people in a homely environment. While many children were assimilated into foster families, many other attempts to foster them ended unhappily. And the 'family group homes' were a flop. As the record shows, people did not stay long enough in charge of these homes.

15. 2 EARLY REACTIONS TO THE ACT

The act had been in force for barely a year before Mrs Barbara Ayreton-Gould,

MP, raised, in parliament, the question of preventive services. Her lobby impressed some people working in child care but the debates which she had initiated in the Commons were disappointing. They concentrated upon the need to amend the law to get more children before the court as being in need of care or protection. Dr Haydn-Guest, MP, a former London County Council assistant medical officer, was principally concerned to get more residential nurseries. Every member who spoke in the second reading debate was a member of the majority (Labour) party. Government responded by introducing the measure which became the Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1952. This made it no longer necessary to prove **wilful** neglect in order to satisfy a court that a child was in need of care or protection. Additionally, a duty was laid by Section 2 of that act upon local authorities to investigate any suggestion that a child might be in need of care or protection. The first effect of the new system of child care was substantially to increase the number of children in care, rising proportionately more steeply than the increasing number of children in the population ²¹⁷. There is no evidence that parents were becoming less and less capable of looking after their children, rather the reverse: standards of living were rising, the proportion of two parent families increased as demobilisation continued, a free universal health service was established, there was more and better housing and higher levels of support, in real terms, were available from the National Assistance Board. More children were in care, **first** because of the increase in the 'bombardment rate': it was no longer disreputable to have your children in public care. **Secondly**, local authority officers pursued less **relentlessly** their duty to husband the financial resources of their employing authorities. Helping parents, perceived to experience difficulty, by receiving their children into care became, for some, a rewarding occupation. A former education welfare officer transferred to the children's department, commenting on

the children's officer's reluctance to receive children into care said, "I like helping people" ^r. In this the local authorities were encouraged by the Home Office. Constraint upon expansion derived from shortage of building materials rather than from shortage of money. The children's committees, unlike the welfare committees, were not confined within the bounds of the 'five year development plans' which welfare committees had to submit to the ministry. It seemed that the Home Secretary's policy, in contrast to that of the Minister of Health, was to let the local authorities have their head. This is odd when you consider the widely contrasting characters of the incumbents, respectively Chuter Ede and Aneurin Bevan. Bringing succour to supposedly disadvantaged children by facilitating their removal from their homes and families gained popularity among some shades of political opinion. Home Office inspectors looked forward to doubling of the numbers of children in care. Many children's committees were impatient to get on as quickly as possible with building programmes. To persuade local authorities to provide sufficient, well-trained staff was another matter. Although the average size of a family had diminished in the first half of the century, there were plenty of councillors who remembered families of a dozen or more. It was difficult to persuade them that the scales of staffing in group care which prevailed at the end of the war were ungenerous. Similarly, since boarded out children were generally, by regulation, to be visited at six-weekly intervals, there seems no reason why boarding out visitors should not have caseloads up to 240, enabling them to make eight visits in a day, to a total of forty foster homes a week. That more than one child might sometimes be fostered in the same household was an uncovenanted bonus, adding still further to the leisure time at the boarding out visitors' disposal. Many local authorities were as grudging about the expansion of staff as they were generous in providing buildings and other material facilities. As to training, many of the councillors

were experienced as parents and every one of them had had experience as a child, so what more was there to learn? Every councillor would hold up their hand for clean beds and wholesome food, many would support curtains for the windows, play equipment and bedside lockers. However, most of them had to be convinced of the need for more and better staff. The task of convincing councillors of the crucial role of staff in group care and in the field continued, throughout the twenty-three years. It resulted in most marked differences in the quality of care provided by different authorities. These differences resulted partly from variations in the persuasive skills of children's officers but also in variations in the degree to which the children's officers were convinced of those needs.

15. 3 THE GROWTH OF EXPERIMENT

The establishment of the new committees and departments heralded the introduction of experiments in all parts of the country to improve the lot of children in public care. Some of these successful experiments are described in chapter 8, where examples of child care practice considered to be 'good' or 'very good' are extracted from the inspectors' reports. Inherent, however, in the Curtis solution was scope for the perpetuation of large errors, because, by its terms of reference, the committee was expected to float about on the reservoir of children in care and were denied freedom to speculate from where all the water came. Children's committees took over the management of parts of the poor law machinery which had been operating, with repeated modifications, since 1603 and earlier. The committees each inherited bits of a substantial administrative system in which were enmeshed thousands of human beings, of whom a group of about 50,000 children in care was one of the least articulate and least well-equipped to defend itself. A more vocal group was the parents and relatives

of children in care, but much the strongest voice was that of the thousands of employees and committee members engaged in the public child care system. Behind them rumbled the confused expectations of other agencies, such as doctors, health visitors, NSPCC inspectors, the police, teachers and the public generally. Along with the children and the staff came the premises, decayed gothic workhouses, well-starved wartime residential nurseries, several campuses of 'grouped cottage homes', sometimes with their own chapels, swimming baths, assembly halls, sick quarters and gymnasias, and finally those anomalous residues of Victorian philanthropy, the approved schools, which were not to be integrated into the local authority system for another twenty-one years. Notable amongst the 'grouped homes' was that in Authority 055 where the residence of the superintendent matron was a flat on the first floor of the administrative building and stores, arranged so that the matron could see straight into the living quarters of each of the half circle of cottages. It looked like the control tower of a military aerodrome. The councillors and employees operating these systems would have been less than human if their continuing interests in employment, power, prestige and self-regard had not, to an extent, been vested in the continuance of the status quo. Equally significant were the inherited traditions. Some routines, ripe for abolition, were trivial, like the 'condemning day' procedure when staff of homes had to take to the central stores such articles of domestic use as were no longer serviceable in order to get a replacement. Some staff had learned how to get two articles in exchange for one, for example by carefully dividing a wire scribber into two halves and laboriously rubbing down the sharp edges to hide the deception. Other routines to be discontinued had been more burdensome. In Authority 015, the housemothers no longer had to wait each morning outside the office door of the workhouse matron until she saw fit to call them in. Other poor law traditions

were more damaging, including the distressing practice whereby children who lost their homes through eviction also had to lose their parents. From 1949 to 1971, it is estimated that more than sixty thousand children were received into care simply because their parent had no home in which to look after them. Of the large errors committed under the Curtis system, this was the most monstrous. Others were the failure to recognise the importance of talking to children, the failure to maintain links between parents and children, the segregation of brothers and sisters, the failure to prepare young people for adult life, the prolongation of institutional living, the priority given to denominational factors in selecting modes of care and the failure to plan ahead by regular reviews of individual children.

15. 4 THE LEGAL BASIS

The new committees inherited a body of law which seemed adequate at the time. Two features which were highly prized were the provision in Section 44 of the Children & Young Persons Act 1933, which required that:

- 1 "Every court in dealing with a child or young person who is brought before it, either as being in need of care or protection or as an offender or otherwise, shall have regard to the welfare of the child or young person ... "

However, it continued:

" ... and shall in proper case take steps for removing him from undesirable surroundings and for securing that proper provision is made for his education and training."

It is notable that 'education and training' sums up the caring role of agencies looking after deprived children. The second valued provision was that:

- 2 "A court shall not order a child under the age of ten years to be sent to an approved school ..."

This also had a sting in the tail. It went on:

" ... unless for any reason, including the want of a fit person of his own religious persuasion who is willing to undertake the care of

him, the court is satisfied that he cannot suitably be dealt with otherwise ... " (emphasis added).

Some courts and practitioners were careless about compliance with rules of procedure. In consequence, children were sometimes unnecessarily removed from their homes on hearsay and committed to public care. It is submitted that a child's right to be with his family and a parent's right to have the care of a child are fundamental in law, ethics and humanity. A court should have no right to sever the parental tie except on strict evidential proof. The juvenile courts, between 1948 and 1971, rarely spent as long as half a day to determine care proceedings. Since then it has not been unknown for such proceedings to last much longer. Other weaknesses in the law were:

- 1 Local authorities continued to have the power to assume by resolution, in certain circumstances, the rights and powers of the parent of a child in their care. In paragraph 425 (ii) Curtis said that it did not favour the retention of this provision of the poor law but the committee did not positively include its abolition in its list of recommendations. In the event the Children Act provided, in Section 2, for its perpetuation. It continued to be used widely and throughout the duration of the children's departments until the nineteen-eighties.
- 11 The power for any person to apply (ex parte) to a magistrate for an order for the removal of a child to a place of safety while being essential, for the immediate protection of children, was widely drawn, enabling it to be exercised too easily. While some authorities consulted the parents and even invited them to be present when the application was made, others did not. This continuing defect was not finally exposed until the Cleveland affair in 1987. Removal to a place of safety could result in a child's detention for up to twenty-eight days before the parents' views were considered by a court. The Children Act, introduced in parliament in December 1988, provided for the maximum permissible delay to be eight days, with power for the parents to challenge within 72 hours. The injustice of holding a child for such a long period without judicial consideration was exemplified in authority 080 in the first twelve months after 1948. Three children were removed by order of a magistrate made ex parte on the application of an NSPCC inspector. The parents were immediately charged with wilful neglect and acquitted, but their young children, fretting in a residential nursery, could not be restored to their parents' care for another three weeks.
- 111 Courts were not empowered to make orders for the supervision or committal to care of children whose parents neglected them, unless it

could be proved that the neglect was wilful. Authorities were reluctant to bring children before the court where it seemed that it might be difficult to prove that the neglect was wilful, for example in the case of a parent who was mentally disturbed or retarded. Following Mrs Ayreton-Gould's parliamentary campaign, the law was amended by the Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1952, no longer requiring proof of parental wilfulness.

- iv The change in sub-paragraph (iii), above, did not take account of all the hazards which might justify a court in finding that a child was in need of care or protection. Various attempts were subsequently made to define, more widely, the criteria for care proceedings. The definition was again amended in the Children & Young Persons Act of 1969 to include cases where the child's " ... proper development is being avoidably prevented or neglected or his health is being avoidably impaired ... "
- v The law relating to adoption needed strengthening. Legal adoption had been introduced in Britain in 1926. After twenty-two years it was ripe for refinement. For example, there was no provision for three months' delay in making an Adoption Order after the child came into the adopter's possession. In 1948, in Authority 080, a widowed father removed two young children from a residential nursery and gave them to a lady whom he had met casually, despite the children's officer's representations that the intending adopter should first get to know the children. A few months later she phoned to say that she had been granted an adoption order a week or so earlier but now she realised that she had made a terrible mistake.

15. 5 IMPAIRED INHERITANCE

The previous paragraph outlines some of the practice which children's committees inherited. The need for amendment or eradication could not have been foreseen in 1948. Social work practice could only be modified by the accumulation of experience, some derived from grown-up people who had previously been in public care. If progress in child care is considered slow, it was not necessarily due to ignorance or lack of awareness. For example, many child care officers knew that they ought to spend much more time talking to the children and to their parents and their foster parents but were constrained from doing so though lack of time. What was needed after the early years was not so much the need for more buildings but more people. For committee members,

elected on a promise to protect the ratepayers from an expanding bureaucracy, it often meant a total reversal of the manifesto upon which they had been elected.

15. 6 LESSONS FROM THE CURTIS EXPERIMENT

The **first** advantage was the introduction of trained social workers at all levels. In those departments where professional understanding and practice was applied, a stop was put to the presumption that the need for reception into care was self-evident. Children had sometimes been admitted by snap decision after half-an-hour's chat with a parent in the office, without even visiting the home or seeing the children. **Secondly**, corollary of the foregoing, was the recognition that parents should not be written-off because their children had come into care and that it was essential to maintain links between parent, child and the department, both for children thought to be likely to return eventually to their family and, equally importantly, for those whom it seemed might never return. **Thirdly**, the insistence on the personal responsibility of individual staff members for individual children. The **fourth** contribution of social workers was the recognition that people have feelings: that even the most sensible ones could sometimes seem irrationally motivated and might sometimes say the reverse of what they meant - "I don't care whether or not my parents come to see me at Christmas!" - that trivial actions or lightly spoken words might be treasured or resented long after they had been forgotten by the person who initiated them; that "there are tears in things"; intrinsically valueless objects being cherished as symbols or reminders of significant people or events; that people in authority need to be aware of the consequences of their own feelings and that authority is seen to be capricious as well as powerful, that change, or rumour of change, is unsettling; that people on introduction to an unfamiliar regime may experience

acutely anxious feelings in their efforts to conform. These are simple concepts which don't necessarily have to be learned. Many people intuitively see things with the eyes of the child or of the vulnerable adult whom they are trying to help. Others do not, they have to be taught them in order to perform social work.

15. 7 IN THE PUBLIC EYE

Publicity caught the public imagination and focussed a little more attention on the plight of 'deprived' children. People wanted to improve their lot. This energy was sometimes misdirected, sometimes by building paddling pools for teenagers or inviting them to parties with paper hats, crackers and jelly. Much more damage could result from erecting residential nurseries. The Select Committee on Estimates said that all the emphasis had been placed on ameliorating the condition of the children, but times had changed: the service was over its growing pains and the maximum value should be secured from every penny of public money ³⁷¹.

15. 8 SIZE, RELATED TO EFFECTIVENESS

The size of a department seems to have been immaterial. Some authorities such as 151, with about a thousand children under the charge of a capable and hardworking children's officer, even without substantial managerial delegation, gave the children a pretty good deal according to the standards of the times. The performance of some other large authorities such as 065, with an even larger caseload, was deplorable. There may, however, be desirable upper and lower limits. Few outside observers of the London and Middlesex children's departments with, respectively 4,500 and 1,500 children in care regretted their division, in 1965, into twelve and nine London boroughs. At the other end of

the scale, Rutland, with fewer than 20 children in care could not sustain a separate children's department. Twice in the twenty-three years it appointed a children's officer and twice its child care was managed by the children's officer of a neighbouring county. Bootle, Burton-on-Trent and Canterbury with 56, 53 and 30 children, respectively in their care in 1951, never attempted to appoint separate children's officers. Some small authorities like 095, with fewer than a hundred children in care offered such low salaries they could only attract unsuitable candidates. Authority 069 employed seven successive children's officers in the twenty-three years. This casts no reflection on the seven incumbents but only on the council as an employer. Yet Authority 128, with about 60 children in care (and, incidentally an 'unqualified' children's officer who had learned on the job from his/her qualified predecessor), seems to have done a very good job indeed. This authority had a substantial population and rateable value. The low number of children in its care may have been partly due to the socio-economic conditions in the district and partly to the skill of the department in ensuring adequate protection for children without much reception into care. It was in the middle range of authorities, those with between 200 and 1,000 in care that the best work seems to have been done. However, very bad examples, like Authority 116, with about 500 children in care, were also to be found in this range. There seems to be strain on morale when a department is so large that the person supposed to be leading it is remote or even unknown to some members of the rank and file. Recognising this risk, there has been a flurry of schemes for devolution in the larger departments. Sometimes these were followed by further schemes of reorganisation and reintegration. There is no end to reorganisation. It is doubtful what there is to be learned from these exercises. Changes may have been actuated by financial pressures or by the wish to pay off mediocre managers by redundancy or early retirement.

15. 9 THE AFFECT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Child care services in Greater London were redistributed, in 1965, from five disparately-sized authorities to thirty-three London boroughs of broadly similar size. With equal logic the social services in the provinces were reformed in 1974, to produce rather larger units, mainly by uniting the county borough with their surrounding shires in the countryside and by enlarging county boroughs in the conurbations to produce metropolitan district authorities. These changes made for more uniformly sized social services departments. Gone were London, Middlesex and the West Riding of Yorkshire at one end of the scale and Burton-on-Trent, Canterbury and Rutland at the other. Some of the new departments remained too large for the chief officer to be known as a person by every member of staff, let alone by all the people in the department's direct care. Experience showed that the jobs of children's officer and director of social service were fundamentally different. It is not possible for a director of social services to be, in the words of paragraph 443 of the Curtis Report, 'the person to whom the child would look as guardian'. It must, however, be made possible to satisfy another Curtis criterion, described in paragraph 441: 'that all the persons who deal with the child should be known as human beings to the officer of the authority to whom the care of that particular child has been assigned'. There can be no return to the fragmentation initiated by Curtis.

15.10 A TENTATIVE SOLUTION : THE DISTRICT COUNCILS

Apart from the metropolitan councils, which currently administer social services in the conurbations, there are just under 300 district councils within the shire counties. The largest, like Derby, Leicester, Nottingham and Plymouth, have around a quarter of a million population but the great majority have between

150,000 and 80,000. Less than a dozen have populations below 48,000. Many departments within that range, now with enormously increased responsibilities, did well. A solution could be sought by terminating the functions of shire county councils and letting district councils become all-purpose authorities, like the London boroughs and metropolitan district councils. The government has already announced an intention to make the district councils in Scotland and Wales into all-purpose authorities and they are establishing a commission to consider the English provincial authorities. The move would have the further advantage of ending the existing dichotomy between the responsibilities of district councils for housing homeless families, some planning and environmental health on the one hand and that of shire counties for social services on the other. The government commission already facing the problem had power to consider other arrangements for exceptionally poor. The argument against a transfer to district councils has, in the past, been that they are too small to support separate establishments like observation and assessment centres for children and homes for physically disabled people. It is also argued that special expertise in such matters as child abuse, adoption and assessing the needs of disabled or elderly people could not be readily made available to social services departments run by district councils. Both these arguments are of dubious validity. Great changes have occurred in the social services during the last ten years. The shift away from residential group care, which many practitioners have envisaged for the last forty years, is at last becoming reality. The observation and assessment centres are going the same way as the mental hospitals and the approved schools have gone. Admittedly the alternative, 'care in the community', presents a bleak alternative for some mentally disordered people and this must, of course, be remedied. Big strides have been made in community care for youngsters and in alternative treatment for young offenders.

15.11 THE EXAMPLE OF THE FIFTIES

From 1948 onwards, social workers initiated a revolution in the care of children, away from institutional alienation: a revolution which is not yet fully implemented. In the nineteen-seventies, social workers and community nurses began a similar operation for mentally disordered people although they were sadly constrained by being denied a large enough share of the savings effected by closing the asylums; an amount difficult to quantify. With a suitable expansion of social work and other services for care in the community there will eventually be no lack of special expertise available to the district councils. In the initial stages, there were not enough experts in each aspect of social work to go round and it might be necessary to share an advisor among two or more district authorities. This was used with success in London and Middlesex when the child care work was moved to the London borough.

15.12 METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS AS CRUCIBLES

It would, of course, be unwise to plan for the transfer of social services from the shire to district without first examining the record of existing social services departments in the existing district. The performance of authorities with similar, though rather larger populations, provided scope for feasibility studies. Such studies could be conducted independently, but in liaison with the social services inspectorate. Such a study would have the advantage that it could be planned in advance and not, as in 1965, be conducted retrospectively from the incomplete data provided in the old Home Office reviews. Comparisons between the performance of the existing district councils and of the shire county councils might afford significant evidence to justify transfers to the districts. Particular attention might be directed to the benefits of local networks, civic pride and volunteer groups in the more compact setting of a district council.

15.13 INNER CITIES

There still remained the problem of the large conurbations: Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield for a start. Big cities everywhere in the world have needs and problems of their own which cannot be readily resolved. London tackled the problems in 1965 and broke into thirty-three viable units. It is doubtful if such a solution would be acceptable to any big provincial city. This would not only be a matter of pride but one of logistics. London and Middlesex enjoyed, since the nineteenth century, subordinate local government bodies, with local civic centres, already forming nuclei for self-aware communities. In 1965 it was found that Greater London already had too many town halls, not too few! The same would not be true of the provincial cities. It needs further study by those with (and those without) experience in these immense authorities.

15.14 THE CRUCIAL TASK OF MANAGEMENT

In 1988, Wally Harbert, in 'The Welfare Industry', pointed out that professional social workers comprise a very small proportion of all those employed in social services departments. In 1948, what was lacking in most public assistance departments was the social workers' appreciation of the wider range of human need. From 1948 it has been implied that social workers provided the essential ingredient of the task of children's departments and of their successors, the social services departments. It is true that social work was an essential ingredient and equally true that it is not the only one. An essential element of that skill is to take proper account of the expertise provided by other disciplines. While the film company cannot do without the actors and the marine enterprise cannot do without the sailors, it does not follow that they must have

an actor or a sailor respectively in charge. Indeed, as is seen in the health service, it is inadvisable to have medical practitioners in charge of hospitals: it would be a waste of their talents.

15.15 A FRESH START FOR SOCIAL WORK

The lesson of this thesis is that social services in general, and children's departments in particular, inherited users, buildings, staff, practices and traditions, some of which dated back to 'the new poor law', introduced by the Commissioners in 1834. Making allowances for the culture of the times in which it was born and in which it grew up, the poor law had some commendable features, notably financial probity, clearly-defined principles, applied by strictly-accountable staff within well-defined legal structures. It was firmly rooted in the local communities whose views were mediated to the officials by elected guardians. This formed the stout foundation upon which new and exciting structures were built, fashioned first by Curtis and subsequently by Seebohm. What Curtis brought about was the infusion of social work into the public care of children. The characteristics of social work in 1948 were:

- i commitment to the interests of disadvantaged people
- ii a combination of intuitive and learned understanding of human nature
- iii the capacity to view situations through the eyes of the people using the service
- iv an appreciation of the social, emotional and economic factors and relationships affecting the user of the service

Curtis' prescription certainly ensured the recruitment of children's officers with the first requirement, commitment to the consumers' interests. The trained social workers among the first children's officers should also have displayed the three other characteristics, given the state of knowledge at the time. What many children's officers manifestly lacked was a capacity to lead, administer or

manage, whichever word is currently fashionable to describe the function of a local authority chief officer. In recognising the managerial function as paramount, commitment remains essential. We don't appoint anarchists as chief constables, atheists as bishops or pacifists as admirals. The danger is that social services may fail in their duty to advocate the course of the user. All publicly funded services are conducted in tension between the consumers' interests and the interests of the indirect and direct taxpayer, including the users of the service. The Select Committee was right to say, in 1953, that the maximum value should be secured from every penny of public expenditure. Securing that value is not the same as limiting expenditure to a bare minimum, values must be assessed in terms of service provided. With hindsight it is clear that some expenditure by children's committees would have been better devoted to other purposes. The chief officer's task is to advise the committee of the estimated cost of developing the service to the standard which he has been appointed to provide, and to negotiate for sufficient resources. Determining what is sufficient is, of course, a political decision which the elected members can only make accurately if the choices are clearly presented to them. It is then the officers' job to see that the users get the best value. This calls for finely-balanced allocations which can only be made with advice from the various professional disciplines engaged in service provision. The danger is that social services committees may start to appoint chief officers with no higher aim than satisfying minimum guidelines and regulations. That would mean going back to the poor law.

15.16 IMPLEMENTATION

The overall impression gained by study of the inspectors reports is that the task of implementing the Children Act 1948 was attacked with energy and enthusiasm

by practically every newly appointed children's officer and by the majority of children's committees. There was a revolutionary spirit abroad in England which wanted a fair deal for all, including a fair deal for children deprived of a normal home life. This spirit tended also to pervade the children's officers and the staff who had been transferred from public assistance and education departments. It was shown, however, that a great deal of this enthusiasm (and, indeed, of financial resources) was misapplied. First, much money and effort was devoted in some parts of the country to planning and opening residential nurseries which had to be closed and sold at a loss within a few years of their opening, leaving half a century of loan charges to be repaid on the lost capital. Secondly, over the 23 years, a crowd of 'children who wait' was built up from those for whom inadequate long term plans were made. Consequently they lingered 'in care' until the approach of adult life. Apart from the effects of this lack of foresight, the scene was patchy. Where it was inspired by social work principles, backed by appropriately targetted resources, the service went some way to meeting need. Progress was made and the children and their families got a better deal. Where the direction of the work followed the grooves left by the poor law, the general tendency was to have 'more of the same'. In some cases lots more of the same, at ever increasing cost in suffering to the children and expense to the rate and taxpayers. Of course the burden of need was not evenly spread. People in the inner cities endured hardship, bad housing, poverty, prejudice and ill-health, as they do now, to a degree which could be better contained by the social services in the rural provinces. Some children's departments in the smaller cities were little gems of good management, judged by the standards of the times. Others reduced the inspectors to despair. Some counties in the north and midlands and others in the south and west emerged as leaders of good practice, while other counties stayed in the doldrums. The limited numbers of trained

child care officers, encouraged by their tutors, tended to apply for jobs where their newly acquired knowledge and expertise would be appreciated and used. These favoured authorities were not confined to any particular part of the country. Now, forty or more years later, we can glimpse very serious failures in most of the earlier child care authority, including each of the authorities which were successively headed by the author of this study. "We tried hard, but not hard enough."

15.17 COMMITTEES

Committee members are elected to serve the wishes and needs of the electorate within the framework of law and financial resources. A 'good' committee was not in the pocket of the chief officer, nor slavishly obedient to the wishes of central government. A committee cannot turn a mediocre chief officer into a good one but an unhelpful committee can mar the performance of a better one. Party allegiance had little to do with standards of service. Committees of 'rich' authorities with high rateable values and conservative councils tended to be more bountiful than those of 'poor' authorities with labour majorities. The heavy burden of need carried by less prosperous councils never seemed to be adequately compensated by the Rate Support Grant. A few committees were disfigured by personal resentments among the members, often unrelated to party allegiances. Firm and fair chairmanship could usually restrain inter-personal rivalry, but a weak and vacillating chair, or one who was at odds with the children's officer, could be a disaster.

15.18 CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

A special feature of the group of people first appointed to be children's officers was that there were, within the local government service, too few people of

experience and calibre to make all the new appointments from those already familiar with the duty imposed by the new act. There were distinguished assistant education officers who had experience of most of the duties falling to a children's officer and some of the most successful appointments were made from this group. In the boroughs there were officers who had headed education welfare departments. Some of them were appointed as children's officers but others were unsuccessful in their applications, particularly because they did not have the kind of qualification which Curtis prescribed. Consequently, about half of the local authorities made their first appointment from people who lacked both experience of the job and of the local government services. Of those appointed from outside, many did well and went on to establish good children's departments. On the other hand, a significant proportion of first-appointees did not survive in the job for more than a few years. They were either dismissed or they resigned to take less demanding jobs. The figures show that there was nothing to choose between the performance of the group of officers who were appointed within the service and those from outside. It seems that on the whole, those who lacked experience made up for it in energy and enthusiasm. After excluding the casualties who departed early from the scene then the survivors among the appointees from outside tended to have better scores than those appointed from within the service. Those having the Curtis accolade of a university degree and a professional social work training were too few in number to be statistically significant but they scored better than most. The first children's officers seem, on the whole, to have been well-liked by their staff. Staff looking after groups in residential care were more likely to feel that their children's officer did not understand the stresses which they experienced. The condition nowadays described as 'burn-out' did not feature in the inspectors' reports. Some of the inexperienced first-appointees who survived had little

capacity for management or administration. They were retained because they had a good idea of what a children's department should be doing and were well liked by the councillors and colleagues. In many instances, another officer in the department, (perhaps the deputy children's officer or the chief clerk, or even someone in the legal department) took a measure of responsibility for guiding the administration.

15.19 ADMISSION TO CARE

It was regarding the admissions of children to care under Section 1 of the Children Act, and their restoration to parents under Sub-Section 1(3), that the most marked differences of policy were reported by the inspectors. There were children's officers who set their faces against lightly acceding to receptions into care: some because they lacked group residential accommodation and had not developed boarding-out; some because of the extra expense and some who, for the sake the children themselves, move heaven and earth to prevent receptions into care. Even where great attention was paid to investigating applications for reception into care the desirability of considering early restoration might be neglected. The proportion of the child population in care varied markedly between authorities with apparently similar socio-economic problems as Packman shows, in 'Child Care Needs and Numbers' ³⁰⁵. While the inspectors criticised many departments for lacking machinery for the proper investigation of applications for care, they were extremely sensitive to the risk that a child might come to grief after an application for his reception into care had been postponed or declined. Even where an inspector's enquiry showed that a department's investigations were conducted conscientiously, they were jumpy about departments with low proportions of children in care. 'Better safe than sorry'. Few realised that a low proportion of children in care might be the

result of energetic restoration rather than by stony-hearted refusal of parental applications. The attitudes of individual departments might be arranged on a continuum between poles representing two unhelpful extremes - 'Care is good for you' and 'Care may seriously injure your health'. The inspectors paid scant attention to the other route of admission to care, through the courts. Presumably they thought that children's officers had little, if any, role in protecting children from being committed to care by the courts. This disregards the whole principle of 'intermediate care' which came into effect only towards the end of the twenty-three.

15.20 MAINTAINING LINKS WITH FAMILIES

Some authorities inherited a tradition, from the education and public assistance committees, that long term reception or committal into care brought an end to a child's link with his family, who were *ex hypothesi* incompetent as parents. This view was reinforced by the Monckton report, in which Sir Walter dealt lightly with the complaint that Mr and Mrs O'Neil did not know where Terence and Dennis were placed. He commented that they had not asked for the boys' address. In general it was lack of time rather than lack of concern which resulted in many children losing touch with their parents, even after 1948. The requirement that parents should keep in touch with the authority applied only until the child reached the age of sixteen, presumably because after that time there would be no liability for parental contributions. Authority 119, an average size authority, had the highest commendation from the inspectors for keeping children in touch with parents. They had a compact area with good public transport. Large rural counties could not emulate that authority in this respect.

15.21 MAINTAINING LINKS BETWEEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS

This is a similar but distinguishable issue from that of maintaining links with the remainder of the family. Brothers and sisters may come into care together at the same time or at intervals, but either way authorities should see that links were maintained between brothers and sisters who were in care of the same authority, or indeed, of different authorities. Some children's officers set their faces against separating brothers and sisters, especially those who had come into care together and who showed some dependence upon each other. Others had a vigorous policy of boarding out and would, if necessary, separate brothers and sisters to go to separate foster homes. There was talk of 'neighbourhood boarding out', which implied that brothers and sisters could be fostered separately with neighbours who already knew each other. Inspectors' reports do not show to what extent 'neighbourhood boarding out' survived in the months after placement nor to what extent it had always been a fantasy.

15.22 REVIEW OF WELFARE AND PROGRESS

While it was impossible to put off investigating the clamour of parents and other agencies asking for reception into care it was always possible to put off the six-monthly reviews of children's progress which, in any case, applied only to boarded-out children until the law was altered in 1969. Many authorities displayed a dismal lack of planning and thoughtfulness, because adequate staff, administrative machinery and motivation were lacking for the systematic and thoughtful conduct of reviews. Even where there was time, there was naturally some reluctance on the part of child care officers to reveal details of their work to senior staff. One chief executive, in authority 116 complained to the Home Office that they were harrassing the children's officer to spend time on 'paperwork' on reviews instead of on looking after the children's welfare. The

inspectors reports are full of examples of reviews being postponed or scamped and of action not being taken on the decisions reached. There was, during the period under review, never any suggestion that a child of whatever age should be present at his or her review.

15.23 MODES OF CARE

Along with the controversy over criteria for reception into care, there was a long-running argument about the supposed merits of boarding out compared with group care. There was a variety of modes of caring for children including residential special schools, 'home on trial', and all kinds of placements in the private sector. The percentage of children boarded out, and increases and diminutions in that percentage, provided some sort of an index of the time and energy available to be devoted to children's individual placements. If the boarding out percentage was sluggish it probably meant that children were being allowed to accumulate, unplanned for, in the children's homes. Of course everything depended on the quality of the work done in finding, preparing and sustaining foster homes and not upon the quantity of children boarded out.

15.24 PROVIDING SERVICE

In considering quality, this study has evaluated the extent to which the major virtues were displayed by the department from top to bottom. Such things as punctuality, integrity and reliability, were given more value than examining the details of casework. The effect on the children and the adults around them was the criterion for good casework, not the ability to handle concepts. One feature of good casework in the nineteen-fifties and sixties was that the managerial structure enabled practising social workers to stick with the children and their families. A newly-trained worker could start in an area office and move up

through posts as senior child care officer and assistant children's officer without changing location or losing touch, so long as they were needed, with children and families with whom they had started. The need to move around to get promotion developed markedly after 1971, although colleagues with experience in the United States and Canada warned what was to come later.

15.25 PREVENTION

With the appointment of the Ingleby Committee there came renewed interest in 'preventive' work, which meant social work directed to ensuring that children were not received into care except in the interests of their welfare. Authorities tended to accede to parental requests without adequate investigation, provided they had a vacancy in a group residential establishment. They also tended to let the children stay in care so long as there was room, unless the parents asked for them. There was thus a great wave of interest when the 1963 act gave power to authorities to promote the welfare of children by diminishing the need to receive them or keep them in care. For the first time power was given to spend money to this end in exceptional circumstances. Budget provision for this purpose continued to rise annually. The need to give money to parents generally only arose when some other statutory service, National Assistance, Housing, Education or Health had failed. (Since the establishment of the 'Social Fund', limiting provision for 'special needs', this is no longer true.) In 1963, marked changes in attitude were seen in some departments, which had not previously interpreted Section 1 of the Children Act as a power and a duty to exercise social work skill as a means of saving children from reception into care. 'Family Advice Centres' sprang up and imaginative schemes were established to supplement the services which could have been supplied by other agencies. There remained a difference of approval between the proactive departments who

went out to look for children in danger of reception into care and the reactive departments who waited until parents or other agencies made applications for help. An ambiguously-worded circular, number 17/1964, from the Home Office seemed to dissuade authorities from sending out preventive workers to offer their services to families who had not asked for help. There was a risk of encouraging dependency among families who could just about provide 'good enough' parenting on their own and who would have benefitted more from community work than from a department which was primarily seen by the public as offering group residential care.

15.26 CHILDREN AT RISK

A grave deficiency of child care throughout the whole of the existence of children's departments was failure to recognise the 'battered baby' syndrome. The Association of Children's Officers published a pamphlet in 1953 claiming that cruelty to children was rare and was associated with drunkenness which was also diminishing. Only in the last few years before 1971 was notice taken of the warnings from America, that undetected non-accidental injury to children was rife. The spectre of widespread sexual abuse had not made its appearance before the work was transferred to social services departments in 1971.

15.27 THE ANSWER

- 1 The Act of 1948 was to see that social work ideas could become acceptable to child care.
- 2 Based on inspectors' reports, committees appointed some very good and some poor people. Some of the poor people were appointed to large authorities. The level of performance was fairly evenly spread between the better authorities and the poor ones and presents no material for statistical comparison.
- 3 Changes were slow but some forged ahead and others virtually stood still. Promotion was NOT the reason for several departures of newly-appointed children's officers.

- 4 The experiment continued too long and resulted in an interest becoming vested in maintaining the system of separate children's officers. It was ended by the Seebohm Committee's recommendations.
- 5 Inspectors' reports identified recommendations which occurred frequently enough to establish some criteria for awarding grades of performance. These were:
- a Committees
There was an interval in which they were discounted by official reports. The law and the practice of committee responsibilities were subsequently re-established.
 - b Children's Officers
"This may indeed be said to be our solution to the problem referred to us."
 - c Admission and Discharge to and from Care
One key to performance related to the general desirability of reception into care. Some authorities welcomed applications in order to keep their residential establishments at full strength.
 - d Facilities for Reception
Used early by some authorities but virtually unused by others.
 - e Keeping in Touch with Parents
Introduced sporadically and partly dependent upon the authority's size.
 - f Keeping Brothers and Sisters in Touch
Introduced sporadically. Dependent on the time and attitude of workers.
 - g Recording Children's Progress
Taken up only sporadically in the early years, although obligatory for boarded out children from 1946.
 - h Modes of Care
Dependent largely on the department's attitude and staffing levels.
 - i Level of Provision of Child Care Workers.
Dependent on the attitudes of committees and staff.
 - j Level of Casework
Dependent upon skill in getting and keeping workers.
 - k Casework and Recording.
The misleading effect of process recording. The 'write up' sometimes carried out weeks after the event.

A P P E N D I X

A SINGLE CASE STUDY

1 INTRODUCTION

Tom Curtis, aged eleven and John Curtis, aged seven, came into care in 1957 and remained in care until each was eighteen. Their experiences, judged from records, show the strength and weaknesses of a reputable children's department from 1957 to 1968. The family was evicted from a building which was to be demolished. Neither the housing nor the welfare department offered accommodation. Mrs Curtis took George, the eldest son, to share a rented room with her and Mr Curtis found shelter elsewhere. Leslie, aged 16, was already in a foster home following committal to care for poor school attendance.

2 TOM CURTIS

In his first fourteen weeks in care, Tom went to three children's homes, a residential special school and a holiday foster home. He continued to board until leaving the school five years later. Holidays were spent in successive foster homes and children's homes.

3 JOHN CURTIS

He went from a reception centre to a family group home. The housemother found that he continually soiled himself, a symptom which recurred throughout his ten years in care. In 1959 he went to a foster home. The encopresis, which had remitted, recurred. He was moved to a reception home where he continued to soil. He was moved back to the children's home from which, in 1962, he stayed out late looking for his mother and was punished with the cane on two occasions.

Under threat from the police he was sent to a privately-owned boarding school as a 'maladjusted pupil'. A year later most of the school's staff left. He was sent to a second private boarding school, much against the wishes of the child care service who had been offered no second choice by the Education Committee. He spent holidays with foster parents or in a convalescent home 200 miles away.

4 THE CURTIS FAMILY

The parents never again lived under the same roof. Mrs Curtis and George kept in touch with the three boys in care but Mr Curtis died in 1961, after imprisonment for not paying parental contributions.

5 THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The authority's area was above average in population. The children's officer was qualified and inspectors said the children's department was well run and staffed with highly organised central records and a sound administrative plan. In addition, regulations were observed and visits were up-to-date. The area officers were almost autonomous, having the power to decide when to receive a children into care and how they should be accommodated. Every child received into care was placed on someone's caseload.

Home Office File CHN736/1/1 (Restricted)

6 THE AREA WITHIN THE AUTHORITY

The area officer, Miss Moss, was qualified with experience in hospitals and in a voluntary children's society and her deputy, Miss Porter, had a sociology degree and a child care certificate. Miss Moss had been in post for several years and remained in charge throughout the time the boys were in care. She

was interested and spoke with detailed knowledge of the children in her care. The Home Office inspectors thought highly of her. She gave inspectors a better survey than they had experienced elsewhere. With her staff of two child care officers she supervised about 200 children of which 50 were in foster homes. Each day the post was opened with the child care officers present and the area's system was by far the best seen in the department. Inspectors saw that Miss Moss could be responsible for thousands of pounds of expenditure in maintaining children in care, went through all the cases and claimed that all that could be done was done to restore them to their parents.

7 THE INSPECTORS' VIEWS IN 1967

The views were modified when other inspectors reported ten years later. One had many years' experience as a children's officer and the other had been in charge of a well known residential establishment. They said that reviews were superficial and often failed to record:

- a any discussion with a child about his family
- b the presence of other children or adults in a foster home
- c any contacts with parents, brothers or sisters
- d religious upbringing

Many foster homes had been used after a single visit with a report or two or three lines, and sometimes the placements ended in adoption. No record was made of any investigation preceding reception into care, only some answers to questions printed on the 'Form of Application for Reception into Care'. A copy of this form served as a social history as each boy moved from place to place. The reason given for reception was simply, 'homeless family', and the history was given as 'poor type of parent - working class'. Reviews were conducted by the area officer and the key worker. Inspectors wanted to single out a few reviews for closer consideration but this was not implemented. Home Office CHN879/411 (Restricted).

Miss Moss wrote:

" ... it is very likely I may not be able to contact the parents ... the family is very stupid and poor".

A relative called Roland, who may have been a half-brother or an uncle, retained contact. Mr Curtis also wrote and Miss Moss replied saying that she hoped he would get accommodation. This was the last contact he had with the department before he died.

8 MISS MOSS' OPINION OF PARENTS' CAPACITY TO CARE

The assistant children's officer had asked if the father or Roland would be visited. Miss Moss said:

"I do believe that Mr and Mrs Curtis are devoted to their children but it is unlikely they will ever succeed. Mrs Curtis' standards are so low that it might be risky for John to return."

Nevertheless, in 1959 Miss Moss wrote to the housing officer who replied that he was unable to offer the family housing for many months. Miss Moss sought the help of an NSPCC inspector to get the family rehoused. A senior psychiatric registrar said that only work on John's family, so that he could be returned home, would be of lasting help. The principal area medical officer said every effort should be made to reunite the family.

9 SUMMARY OF CHANGES FOR TOM AND JOHN

On twelve occasions (nine group homes and three foster homes), Tom spent the night in care of strangers in new surroundings. On at least six occasions he was moved by a stranger whom he met when the journey started. Meanwhile John went to thirteen new surroundings (nine group homes and four foster homes or lodgings), moved on at least three occasions by a total stranger.

Much depended on the relationships between children's and housing departments and in 1956 inspectors noted that there was deep-rooted dislike between the two. Individual officers could persuade local housing officials to consider a homeless family but any mention of the central office would have brought a refusal to go beyond a strict interpretation of the rules. Poor relationships with the housing department significantly affected the Curtis boys' deprivation.

The distant children's officer asked for particulars of Tom's history and requested copies of future correspondence. She had visited Tom at a foster home where they spoke of him with affection and he got on well with the family's son. The foster parents were interested in Tom and wondered about his health, especially his rash, aggravated by nervous picking. In a reply to Miss Moss, the school headmaster said:

"Tom is perfectly healthy and has no nervous habits".

School staff reported that the foster parents had visited him during termtime and had expressed displeasure at Tom's going out with his mother. At Christmas the foster mother planned several days' holiday in Tom's home city. Miss Moss asked if Tom could visit his mother there and the foster parent replied:

"Of course I think it is a nice idea but Tom will have to forego a day and that will be his choice".

Tom spent five days in the city without seeing his mother owing to confused telephone calls. He spent Easter closer to home and saw his mother and John every weekend and visited Roland. He worked in a sawmill during a few spells of employment. Before his eighteenth birthday, Tom behaved in a bizarre way and was moved to a psychiatric hospital. Twenty years later he was still there and, in 1984, his mother was still visiting him. John left school and lived at

a voluntary home. A psychiatrist recommended him for a day training centre and he became a washer-up in a factory. In 1968, aged eighteen, he was placed in lodgings and supervised by a mental welfare officer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography focusses on British publications up to and including the period under review, and subsequent historical works.

Bibliography numbers shown in **bold** denote a reference to that publication, indicated as a superscript number within the text of the thesis.

Information from unpublished sources will be found in the archives of The British Association of Social Workers, 16 Kent Street, Birmingham B5 6RD.

- | | | | |
|---|------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| AINSWORTH M D, ANDRY R G, HARLOW R G, LEBOVICI S | | | |
| Deprivation of Maternal Care : A Reassessment of its Effects | | | |
| Geneva | 1962 | The World Health Organisation | 001 |
| ALLEN Lady of Hurtwood | | | |
| Whose Children? | | | |
| London | 1945 | Favil Press | 002 |
| APTE Robert | | | |
| Halfway Houses | | | |
| London | 1970 | Bell | 003 |
| ARNOLFI I O | | | |
| We Adopted It | | | |
| London | 1963 | Routledge & Kegan Paul | 004 |
| ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S OFFICERS | | | |
| Helping Families | | | |
| Derby | 1956 | BASW Archives | 005 |
| Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Association | | | |
| London | 1952 | BASW Archives | 006 |
| Cruelty to Children | | | |
| Exeter | 1951 | BASW Archives | 007 |
| Constitution of the Association | | | |
| London | 1949 | BASW Archives | 008 |
| ASSOCIATION OF HEADMASTERS/MISTRESSES & MATRONS OF APPROVED SCHOOLS | | | |
| Approved Schools and the Future : | | | |
| Monograph No 7 of the Technical Sub Committee | | | |
| Knutsford | 1955 | Approved Schools Gazette - Supplement | 009 |
| ASSOCIATION OF MANAGERS OF APPROVED SCHOOLS | | | |
| Observations on the White Paper : | | | |
| The Child, the Family and the Young Offender | | | |
| | 1966 | British Library Shelf X100/15996 | 010 |

ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORKERS My Work as Children's Officer 1948 BASW Archives	011
ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS Report on Registration and the Social Worker Slough 1955 BASW Archives	012
BALBERNIE Richard Residential Work with Children Oxford 1972 Chances Publishing	013
BALL Josephine Where Love Is : The Fostering of Young Children London 1958 Gollancz	014
BARNARDO Thomas J Something Attempted, Something Done London 1898 John F Shaw & Co	015
BARNES M W Mary Curtis to Seebohm Coventry 1980 City of Coventry	016
BAZELEY E T Homer Lane and the Little Commonwealth London 1928 Allen & Unwin	017
BEAN Philip and MacPHERSON Stewart (Ed) Approaches to Welfare London 1983 Routledge & Kegan Paul	018
BECHER The Rev John Thomas The Anti Pauper System : Exemplifying the Positive and Practical Good Realised etc London 1828 W Simpkin & R Marshall	019
BEEDELL Christopher Residential Life with Children London 1970 Routledge & Kegan Paul	020
BERRY Juliet Daily Experience in Residential Life: A Study of Children and their Care Givers London 1975 Routledge & Kegan Paul	021
Social Work with Children London 1972 Routledge & Kegan Paul	022

BEVAN H K			
The Law Relating to Children			
London	1973	Butterworths	023
BEVERIDGE Sir William			
Social Insurance & Allied Services			
Report: Cmnd 6404			
London	1942	HMSO	024
BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT			
Fostering : A Blueprint for Birmingham			
Report of a Departmental Working Party			
Birmingham	1969	Birmingham City Council	025
The First Four Years			
Birmingham	1953	Birmingham City Council	026
BLACKIE John			
Inspecting and the Inspectorate			
London	1970	Routledge & Kegan Paul	027
BODMAN F H, SYKES M K, McKINLAY M M			
The Social Adaptation of Children Brought in up Institutions			
London	1950	The Lancet	028
BOOTH William			
Darkest England and the Way Out			
London	1898	John F Dell & Co	029
BOSS Peter			
Exploration into Child Care			
London	1970	Routledge & Kegan Paul	030
Social Policy and the Young Delinquent			
London	1967	Routledge & Kegan Paul	031
BOTTOMS A E and McCLINTOCK			
Criminals Coming of Age			
Institutional Adaptation in Treatment of Adult Offenders			
London	1973	Heinemann	032
BOVET Lucien			
Psychiatric Aspects of Juvenile Delinquency			
WHO Monograph Series No 1			
Geneva	1951	World Health Organisation	033
BOWLBY John			
Child Care and the Growth of Love			
London	1965	Penquin Books	034
Maternal Care and Mental Health			
Geneva	1951	World Health Organisation	035

Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves : Their Characters and Home Life London 1947 Bailliere, Tyndall & Cox	036
BRILL Kenneth (Ed) John Groser : East London Priest Oxford 1971 Alden & Mowbray Ltd	037
BRILL Kenneth and THOMAS Ruth Children in Homes London 1964 Gollancz	038
BRITISH AGENCIES FOR ADOPTION & FOSTERING 1 Genetic and Psychological Aspects : 2 Selecting Adopters London 1970 British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering	039
BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS Social Workers & Employers : Policy and Guidance for Social Workers about Relationships with Employing Agencies Birmingham 1983 British Association of Social Workers	040
BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND THE MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION Cruelty to and Neglect of Children Report of a Joint Committee London 1956 British Medical Association	041
BRUCE George A Family called Field London 1959 Evans Brothers Ltd	042
BURLINGHAM Dorothy and FREUD Anna Infants without Families The Case for and against Residential Nurseries London 1955 George Allen & Unwin	043
BURMEISTER Eva The Professional Houseparent New York 1960 Columbia University Press	044
BURN Michael Mr Lyward's Answer London 1956 Hamish Hamilton	045
BURNS Tom and SINCLAIR Simon The Child Care Service at Work Edinburgh 1962 HMSO	046
BURT Sir Cyril The Young Delinquent London 1948 London University Press	047
BUTLER R A The Art of the Possible London 1971 Hamish Hamilton	048

CAFFEY J			
Multiple Fractures in the Long Bones of Children etc			
USA	1946	American Journal of Roentgenology	049
CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION			
Report of a Study Group on Community Work and Social Change			
London	1968	Longmans	050
CARE OF CHILDREN COMMITTEE : 1945-1946			
Chairman : Curtis			
Report : Cmd 6922			
London	1946	HMSO	051
Interim Report on Training of Staff : Cmd 6760			
London	1946	HMSO	052
CARLEBACH Julius			
Caring for Children in Trouble			
London	1970	Routledge & Kegan Paul	053
CARPENTER Mary			
Red Lodge Girls' Reformatory School, Bristol			
The History, Principles and Working			
Bristol	1875	Arrowsmith	054
Reformatory Schools for Children of the Perishing and			
Dangerous Classes and for Juvenile Offenders			
London	1858	C Gilpin	055
CASTEL Jean			
Casework in Child Care			
London	1962	Routledge & Kegan Paul	056
CAVANAGH Winifred Elizabeth			
The Child and the Court			
London	1959	Gollancz	057
CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING IN SOCIAL WORK			
Discussion Document on Training for Residential Work			
London	1973	CCETSW	058
CENTRAL HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE			
Unsatisfactory Tenants			
London	1954	HMSO	059
CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION			
Children in Britain : Reference Pamphlet No 34 - 2nd Edition			
London	1961	HMSO	060
Child, Youth and Family Welfare :			
No 1 in Legal and Administrative Series - Vol II			
London	1950	HMSO	061

CENTRAL TRAINING COUNCIL IN CHILD CARE			
Staff Development & In-Service Study for Staff of Children's Departments			
London	1970	HMSO	062
Residential Care of Children:			
9th Impression with Amendments			
London	1968	HMSO	063
Child Care Officer Training			
London	1968	HMSO	064
Memorandum of Guidance on Practical Training of Child Care Officer Students			
London	1963	HMSO	065
Courses recognised by the Council			
London	1961	HMSO	066
Memo on Child Care Training			
London	1961	HMSO	067
Training for Residential Care of Children			
London	1960	HMSO	068
CHANCE W			
Children Under the Poor Law			
London	1897	Swan Sonnenschein & Co	069
CHARNLEY Jean			
The Art of Child Placement			
Minneapolis	1961	Minnesota University Press	070
CHESSEY Eustace			
Cruelty to Children			
London	1951	Gollancz	071
The Unwanted Child			
London	1947	Rich & Cowan	072
CLOWARD Richard A and OHLISS Lloyd Edgar			
Delinquency and Opportunity : A Theory of Delinquent Gangs			
London	1961	Routledge & Kegan Paul	073
COHEN Albert H			
Delinquent Boys : The Culture of the Gang			
London	1956	Routledge & Kegan Paul	074
COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY BUSINESS			
Chairman : Widdicombe			
Report : Cmnd 9797			
London	1986	HMSO	075

COMMITTEE ON THE CARE OF CHILDREN			
Chairman : Clyde			
Report : Cmnd 3911			
Edinburgh	1946	HMSO	076
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS			
Chairman : Ingleby			
Report : Cmnd 1191			
London	1960	HMSO	077
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY & ALLIED PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES			
Chairman : Seebohm			
Report : Cmnd 3703			
London	1968	HMSO	078
COMMITTEE ON MALADJUSTED CHILDREN			
Chairman : Underwood			
Report			
London	1955	HMSO	079
COMMITTEE ON ONE PARENT FAMILIES			
Chairman : Finer			
Report : Cmnd 5629			
London	1974	HMSO	080
COMMITTEE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT			
Chairman : Maud			
Report			
London	1967	HMSO	081
COMMITTEE ON WELFARE IN THE WOMEN'S SERVICES			
Report : Cmd 6384			
London	1942	HMSO	082
COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL			
Chairman : Platt			
Report			
London	1958	Central Health Services Council	083
COMPSTON D F B			
Thomas Coram, Churchman, Empire Builder and Philanthropist			
London	1918	Society for Propogating Christian Knwldge	084
CONWAY E			
The Institutional Care of Children : PhD Thesis			
London	1958	London University	085
COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN'S WELFARE			
A Family Service and a Family Court			
London	1965	Council for Children's Welfare	086
COWIE John, COWIE Valerie, SLATER Elliot			
Delinquence in Girls			
London	1968	Heinemann	087

CRELLIN Eileen, KELLMER PRINGLE Mia, WEST P Born Illegitimate : Social and Educational Implications Slough 1971 National Federation for Educational Rsrch	088
CROYDON CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE Annual Report 1948-1949 Croydon 1949 County Borough of Croydon	089
DALLEY Gillian Collectivism : An Alternative Ideology Birmingham 1988 Social Work Today	090
DAVIES JONES Haydn Leadership in Residential Child Care London 1970 National Children's Home	091
DAVIS R W Disraeli London 1976 Hutchinson	092
DAVIS Bleddwyn, BARTON Andrew, McMILLAN Ian Variations in Children's Services Among British Urban Authorities London 1972 G Bell & Sons	093
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SCIENCE Education of Maladjusted Children : Pamphlet No 47 : Ref (27-265-47) London 1965 HMSO	094
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY Manpower and Training for the Social Services London 1976 HMSO	095
Report of the Committee of Inquiry ... in relation to Maria Colwell London 1974 HMSO	096
Youth Treatment Centres : Explanations Guide to a New Form of Provision for Disturbed Children London 1971 HMSO	097
Summary of Returns of Child Care Staff at March 1970 London 1970 HMSO	098
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY & SCOTTISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT Guide to Fostering Practice London 1976 HMSO	099
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT Chairman : M A Bains Report of a Study Group on Local Authority Management Structure London 1972 HMSO	100

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL			
Minute Book of the Children's Committee			
Exeter	1948	Devon County Council Archives	101
DICKENS Charles			
Oliver Twist : Or the Parish Boy's Progress			
London	1839	Chapman & Hall	102
DINAGE Rosemary and KELLMER PRINGLE Mia			
Foster Home Care : Facts and Fallacies			
London	1967	Longmans Green	103
Residential Care : Facts and Fallacies			
London	1967	Longmans Green	104
DONINGTON Helen			
The Care of Homeless Children			
London	1945	Fabian Society	105
DONNISON David V			
Social Policy and Administration			
London	1965	Allen & Unwin	106
The Neglected Child and the Social Services			
Manchester	1954	Manchester University Press	107
DONNISON David V, CHAPMAN Valerie et al			
Studies in the Development of Social Services at the Local Level			
London	1965	Allen & Unwin	108
DONNISON David V, JAY Peggy, STEWART Mary			
The Ingleby Report : Three Critical Essays			
Fabian Research Series 231			
London	1962	Fabian Society	109
DONNISON David V and STEWART Mary			
The Child and the Social Services			
London	1962	Fabian Research Bureau	110
DOWNES David Malcolm			
The Delinquent Solution : A Study of Subcultural Theory			
London	1966	Routledge & Kegan Paul	111
DUNNE Laurence			
Inquiry into the Accident at Bethnal Green Tube Station			
Shelter on 3 March 1943			
Report : Cmd 6583			
London	1945	HMSO	112
DYSON D M			
The Foster Home and the Boarded-Out Child			
London	1947	Allen & Unwin	113

EAST W, NORWOOD et al			
The Adolescent Criminal			
A Medico-Sociological Study of 1,000 Male Adolescents			
London	1942	Churchill	114
EDELSTON Harry			
The Earliest Stages of Delinquency			
A Clinical Study from a Child Guidance Clinic			
Edinburgh	1952	Livingstone	115
ELKIN Winifred A			
English Juvenile Courts			
London	1938	Routledge & Kegan Paul	116
EYSENCK H J			
Crime and Personality			
London	1964	Routledge & Kegan Paul	117
FERGUSON S M and FITZGERALD H			
Studies in the Social Services : History of the Second World War			
London	1954	HMSO	118
FERGUSON Thomas			
Children in Care - and After			
London	1966	Oxford University Press for Nuffield Foundation	119
The Young Delinquent in his Social Setting : A Glasgow Study			
London	1952	Oxford University Press	120
FIELD Elizabeth			
Types of Delinquency and Home Background			
A Validation Study of Hewitt and Jenkins' Hypothesis			
London	1967	HMSO	121
FLINT Bethy M			
The Child and the Institution : A Study of Deprivation and Recovery			
London	1967	University of London Press	122
FORD Donald			
The Delinquent Child and the Community			
London	1957	Constable	123
The Deprived Child and the Community			
London	1955	Constable	124
FRIEDLANDER Kate			
The Psycho-Analytical Approach to Juvenile Delinquency Theory			
London	1951	Routledge & Kegan Paul	125

FRY Margery and RUSSELL Champion B			
A Note Book for the Children's Court : 3rd Edition			
London	1950	Howard League for Penal Reform	126
FYVEL Roscoe Raphael			
The Insecure Offenders : Rebellious Youth in the Welfare State			
Harmondsworth	1963	Penguin Books	127
GEORGE V			
Foster Care : Theory and Practice			
London	1970	Routledge & Kegan Paul	128
GIBBENS T C N and WALKER A			
Cruel Parents			
London	1956	Inst for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency	129
GIBBS John			
Patterns of Residential Care for Children			
Harpenden	1968	National Children's Home	130
GILES F T			
The Juvenile Courts, their Work and Problems			
London	1946	Allen & Unwin	131
GLUECK Sheldon (Ed)			
The Problem of Delinquency			
London	1959	Houghton Mifflin	132
GOETHIUS George W			
Working with Community Groups			
London	1969	Routledge & Kegan Paul	133
GOLDSTEIN J, FREUD A, SOLNIT A J			
Beyond the Best Interests of the Child			
London	1973	Collier Macmillan	134
GOODACRE Iris			
Adoption Policy and Practice			
London	1966	Allen & Unwin	135
GOVERNOR OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE			
Report to the Secretary of the Colonies relative to the			
Conditions and Treatment of Children sent out by the			
Children's Friend Society			
London	1840	British Parliamentary Pubcns : xxxiii	136
GOWERS Ernest			
Plain Words			
London	1946	HMSO	137

GRAY Eleanor			
Workloads in Children's Departments			
Home Office Research Study No 1			
London	1969	HMSO	138
GRAY P G and PARR Elizabeth A			
Children in Care and the Recruitment of Foster Parents			
London	1959	The Social Survey	139
GRUNHUT Max			
Juvenile Offenders Before the Courts			
Oxford	1956	Clarendon	140
HALE M B and HALE S M			
Social Therapy : An Introduction Study			
London	1941	Williams & Norgate Ltd	141
HALL Penelope			
The Social Services in Modern England			
London	1970	HMSO	142
Social Services in England and Wales			
1st Edition 1952 : 9th Edition 1975			
London	1952	Routledge & Kegan Paul	143
HALLAS J			
Community Health Councils in Action			
London	1976	Nuffield Hospital Trust	144
HARDIE Frank			
The Political Influence of the British Monarchy 1868-1952			
London	1970	Blatchford	145
HASTINGS Somerville and JAY Peggy			
The Family and the Social Services : Tract No 359			
London	1964	Fabian Society	146
HEALEY W and BRONNER A			
New Light on Delinquency and its Treatment			
New Haven	1938	Yale University Press	147
HELLMAN Ilse			
Sudden Separation and its Effect followed over Twenty Years			
London	1962	Institute of Psycho-Analytic Study of Children	148
HEYWOOD Jean S			
Children in Care			
The Development of the Services for the Deprived Child			
London	1959	Routledge & Kegan Paul	149

HILL Florence				
Children of the State				
London	1868	Macmillan		150
HITCHMAN Janet				
King of the Barbareens				
London	1966	Penquin		151
They Carried the Sword				
London	1966	Gollancz		152
HOLLIS Florence				
Casework : A Psychosocial Therapy				
New York	1964	Random House		153
HOLMES G V				
The Likes of Us				
Chatham	1948	W & J MacKay & Co		154

HOME OFFICE

Home Office entries in this bibliography are arranged below under the following subheadings:

HOME OFFICE
HOME OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILD CARE
HOME OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE PENAL SYSTEM
HOME OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS
HOME OFFICE : CHILD ADOPTION COMMITTEE
HOME OFFICE : CHILDREN'S BRANCH
HOME OFFICE : CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT
HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON MATRIMONIAL PROCEEDINGS IN
MAGISTRATES' COURTS
HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON PROBATION SERVICE
HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON ENQUIRY INTO CONDUCT AT STANDON FARM
HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS
HOME OFFICE : DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE
HOME OFFICE : INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE
HOME OFFICE : PROBATION & AFTER CARE DEPARTMENT
HOME OFFICE : RESEARCH UNIT
HOME OFFICE & MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
HOME OFFICE & MINISTRY OF HEALTH & MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
HOME OFFICE & SOCIAL WORK SERVICES GROUP : SCOTLAND

HOME OFFICE

Statistics relating to Approved Schools, Remand Homes and Attendance Centres in England and Wales for 1969				
London	1971	HMSO		155
Supplement on the Children & Young Persons Act 1969				
London	1971	HMSO		156

Youth Treatment Centres London	1971	HMSO	157
Detention Centres : Report for the Advisory Council on the Penal System London	1970	HMSO	158
Part I of the Children & Young Persons Act 1969 A Guide for Courts and Practitioners London	1970	HMSO	159
Children in Trouble : Cmnd 3601 London	1968	HMSO	160
Report of the Inquiry into Punishment at Court Lees Approved School : Cmnd 3367 London	1967	HMSO	161
Dorset County Council Child Care Service Chief Inspector's Report to the Secretary of State London	1966	HMSO	162
Memorandum on Reports of Local Authorities on working of Section 1 of the Children & Young Persons Act London	1965	HMSO	163
The Child, the Family and the Young Offender : Cmnd 2742 London	1965	HMSO	164
The Needs of Young Children in Care London	1964	HMSO	165
Directory of Approved Schools, Remand Homes and Special Reception Centres London	1961	HMSO	166
Children & Young Persons Act : Cmnd 1191 London	1960	HMSO	167
Delinquent Generations London	1960	HMSO	168
Juvenile Offenders and those in need of Care or Protection London	1960	Unpublished Document	169
Report on Disturbance at Carlton Approved School : August 1959 Cmnd 3367 London	1960	HMSO	170
Training in Child Care : A Memorandum of Guidance London	1957	HMSO	171

Approved School After Care London 1955 HMSO	172
Memorandum for the Guidance of Managers & Staff of Approved Schools etc London 1955 HMSO	173
Memorandum on the Boarding-Out of Children Regulations 1955 London 1955 HMSO	174
Memorandum of Guidance on Handicapped Children in the Care of Local Authorities London 1954 HMSO	175
Report on the Circumstances which led to the Boarding-Out of Dennis and Terence O'Neill : Cmd 6636 London 1945 HMSO	176
Approved School Boys London 1952 HMSO	177
Memorandum for the Guidance of Local Authorities on the Provision of Accommodation for Temporary Reception of Children under Section 15(2) London 1952 HMSO	178
Memorandum on the Conduct of Children's Homes London 1952 HMSO	179
Probation Service, its Objects and its Organisation London 1952 HMSO	180
Report on Child Migration to Australia London 1952 HMSO	181
Report of Committee to Review Punishments in Approved Schools, Remand Homes etc : Cmd 8256 London 1951 HMSO	182
Memorandum on the Consolidation of Enactments relating to Adoption of Children London 1950 HMSO	183
Summary of Main Provisions of the Children Bill : Cmd 7306 London 1948 HMSO	184
Memorandum on Boarding-Out of Children and Young Persons London 1946 HMSO	185
Placing in Lodgings or in a Family or a Method of Treatment London 1937 HMSO	186
Approved School Rules London 1933 HMSO	187

HOME OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILD CARE	
Care and Treatment in a Planned Environment	
Second Report of the Community Homes Project	
London 1971 HMSO	188
Community Houses Design Guide	
London 1971 HMSO	189
Guide to Adoption Practice	
London 1970 HMSO	190
Non-Custodial and Semi-Custodial Penalties	
London 1970 HMSO	191
Research and Treatment Strategy	
London 1970 HMSO	192
Memorandum of Guidance on Reception Centres	
London 1952 HMSO	193
Residential Nurseries : Memorandum for the Guidance of	
Local Authorities and Voluntary Organisations etc	
London 1950 HMSO	194
HOME OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE PENAL SYSTEM	
Young Adult Offenders	
London 1974 HMSO	195
Report on Detention Centres	
London 1970 HMSO	196
Detention of Girls in a Detention Centre	
Interim Report of the Advisory Council	
London 1968 HMSO	197
Report on Non-Residential Treatment of Offenders under 21	
London 1962 HMSO	198
HOME OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS	
The Organisation of After Care	
London 1963 HMSO	199
The Treatment of Young Offenders	
London 1959 HMSO	200
HOME OFFICE : CHILD ADOPTION COMMITTEE	
Third Report : Cmd 2711	
London 1926 HMSO	201
Second Report : Cmd 2469	
London 1925 HMSO	202
First Report : Cmd 2401	
London 1925 HMSO	203

HOME OFFICE : CHILDREN'S BRANCH

Report of the Branch

London 1938 HMSO 204

First Report of the Children's Branch

London 1923 HMSO 205

HOME OFFICE : CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

Report on the Work of the Department 1970-1971

London 1971 HMSO 206

Report on the Work of the Department 1967-1969

London 1970 HMSO 207

First Report of the Community Homes Project

London 1969 HMSO 208

Report on the Work of the Department 1964-1966

London 1967 HMSO 209

Report on the Work of the Department 1961-1963

London 1964 HMSO 210

Memorandum of Guidance to Children's Department Inspectors
on Report Writing

London 1964 Circulated within the Department 211

Approved School Statistics : Cmnd 4879

London 1970 HMSO 212

(et seq from 1961)

Approved School Statistics : Cmnd 2051

London 1961 HMSO 213

Memorandum on the Care of Children under Five Years of Age

London 1955 HMSO 214

Seventh Report on the Work of the Department

London 1955 HMSO 215

Sixth Report on the Work of the Department

London 1951 HMSO 216

Summary of Local Authorities' Returns of Children in Care

Annually from 30.11.49

London 1950 HMSO 217

Making Citizens

London 1946 HMSO 218

HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON MATRIMONIAL PROCEEDINGS IN
MAGISTRATES' COURTS

Report of the Committee on Matrimonial Proceedings in

Magistrates' Courts : Cmnd 638

London 1959 HMSO 219

HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON PROBATION SERVICE			
Report			
London	1962	HMSO	220
HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON ENQUIRY INTO CONDUCT AT STANDON FARM			
Report : Cmd 7150			
London	1947	HMSO	221
HOME OFFICE : COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS			
Report			
London	1927	HMSO	222
HOME OFFICE : DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE			
Report on the Adoption of Children : Cmnd 5107			
London	1972	HMSO	223
Provisional Proposals on Adoption for Comment and Criticism			
Ref 8822461			
London	1970	HMSO	224
Report on the Probation Service : Cmnd 1650			
London	1962	HMSO	225
Report on the Adoption of Children : Cmd 9248			
London	1954	HMSO	226
Report on Social Services in Courts of			
Summary Jurisdiction in Metropolitan Area			
London	1937	HMSO	227
Report on Reformatory & Industrial Schools			
London	1896	HMSO	228
Report to enquire into ... District Schools in the Metropolis : C 8027			
London	1896	British Parliamentary Publications	229
HOME OFFICE : INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE			
Reception of Children Overseas			
London	1941	HMSO	230
HOME OFFICE : PROBATION & AFTER CARE DEPARTMENT			
Report for 1962-1965 : Cmnd 3107			
London	1966	HMSO	231
Second Report of Committee on the Probation Service : Cmnd 1800			
London	1962	HMSO	232
First Report of Committee on the Probation Service : Cmnd 1650			
London	1962	HMSO	233
HOME OFFICE : RESEARCH UNIT			
Social Work in the Environment			
London	1974	HMSO	234

The Approved School Experience An Account of Boys' Experience in Training London	1974 HMSO	235
An Index of Social Environment for Use in Social Work Research London	1973 HMSO	236
The Controlled Trial in Institutional Research London	1972 HMSO	237
Absconding from Approved Schools : No 12 London	1971 HMSO	238
Hostels for Probationers London	1971 HMSO	239
Survey of Adoption in Great Britain London	1971 HMSO	240
The Juvenile Liaison Scheme in West Ham : 1961-1965 London	1971 HMSO	241
Thirteen-Year-Old Approved School Boys in 1962 : No 11 London	1971 HMSO	242
Ancillary Staff in Children's Departments : Research Bulletin No 1 London	1969 HMSO	243
Workloads in Children's Departments London	1969 HMSO	244
HOME OFFICE AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION Joint Memorandum on Juvenile Delinquency London	1949 HMSO	245
HOME OFFICE AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION Joint Circular on Children Neglected or Ill-Treated in their own Homes London	1950 HMSO	246
HOME OFFICE AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES GROUP : SCOTLAND A Guide to Adoption Practice London	1976 HMSO	247
HOPKIRK M Nobody Wanted Sam London	1949 John Murray	248
INGLIS M K The Children's Charter A Sketch of the Scope of the Children Act 1908 London	1909 Thomas Nelson & Sons	249

INSPECTOR OF REFORMATORY SCHOOLS OF GREAT BRITAIN			
Fifty-ninth Annual Report : Cd 8367			
London	1916	Brit Parliamentary Publs : xv 351	250
(et seq annually from first report)			
First Annual Report			
London	1858	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 2426 xxix 811	251
JACKA Alan			
The ACCO Story			
London	1974	Society for Education & Research in Social Work	252
JACKSON R M			
The Machinery of Local Government			
London	1958	Macmillan	253
JEHU Derek			
Casework before Admission to Care			
Chorley:Lancs	1964	Assoc of Child Care Officers	254
JENNINGS Sir Ivor			
The Poor Law Code : 2nd Edition			
London	1936	Charles Knight & Co	255
JOBLING Megan			
The Abused Child : An Annotated Bibliography			
London	1976	National Children's Bureau	256
JOHNSON Sir William Branch			
The English Prison Hulks			
London	1957	Christopher Johnson	257
JONES Howard			
Reluctant Rebels			
London	1960	Howard Jones	258
JORDAN Bill			
Helping in Social Work			
London	1959	Routledge & Kegan Paul	259
KAHAN Barbara J			
Oxfordshire Child Care Policy : Past and Present			
Oxford	1968	Oxfordshire County Council	260

Presidential Address to the Association of Children's Officers 1964 BASW Archives	261
KELLMER PRINGLE Mia (Ed) The Needs of Children A Personal Perspective prepared for the DHSS London 1974 Hutchinson	262
The Roots of Violence and Vandalism London 1970 National Children's Bureau	263
Caring for Children London 1969 Longmans Green	264
Investment in Children : A Symposium on Positive Child Care and Constructive Education London 1965 Longmans	265
KELLMER PRINGLE Mia and NAIDOO Sandhya Early Child Care in Britain London 1975 Gordon & Breach	266
KELLMER PRINGLE Mia, SEGLOW Jean, WEDGE Peter Growing Up Adopted A Long Term National Study of Adopted Children Slough 1972 National Foundation for Educational Rsrch	267
KELLMER PRINGLE Mia and SUTCLIFFE B Remedial Education : An Experiment Birmingham 1957 Caldecott Community & University of Birmingham	268
KEMPE Henry C The Battered Baby Syndrome USA 1962 Journal of the American Medical Assoc	269
KEMPE Ruth S and C Henry Child Abuse London 1978 Open Books Publishing Ltd	270
KING Roy D, KING Norma V, TIZARD Jack Patterns in Residential Care London 1971 Routledge & Kegan Paul	271
KING Roy D, RAYNES N, TIZARD Jack Patterns of Residential Care for Handicapped Children London 1971 Routledge & Kegan Paul	272
KORNITZER Margaret Adoption and Family Life London 1968 Putnam	273
Adoption London 1959 Putnam	274

LABOUR PARTY			
Crime : A Challenge to Us All			
London	1964	Labour Party	275
LANE Homer			
Talks to Parents and Teachers			
London	1920	Allen & Unwin	276
LEEDING Alfred E			
Child Care Manual for Social Workers : 2nd Edition			
London	1971	Butterworths	277
LEONARD E M			
The Early History of English Poor Relief			
Cambridge	1965	Cambridge University Press	278
LEWIS Dr Hilda			
Deprived Children : The Mersham Experiment			
London	1954	Oxford University Press	279
LOCH C S			
How to Help in Cases of Distress (1882)			
Plymouth	1977	Continua Publications Ltd	280
MACDONALD Lyn			
Social Class and Delinquency			
London	1959	Faber	281
MACKAY Thomas			
A History of the Poor Law - [NB : see also NICHOLLS Sir George]			
Vol 3 : 1834-1899			
London	1899	P S King & Son	282
McWHINNIE Alexina Mary			
Adopted Children : How They Group Up			
London	1967	Routledge & Kegan Paul	283
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL			
Fourteenth Report of the Work of the Children's Department			
Manchester	1963	Manchester City Council	284
MANNHEIM Hermann			
Juvenile Delinquency in an English Middle Town			
London	1948	Routledge & Kegan Paul	285
MANTON Jo			
Mary Carpenter and the Children of the Streets			
London	1976	Heinemann	286

MAXWELL Alexander			
The Institutional Treatment of Delinquents : Clarke Hall Lecture No 9			
London	1949	Unknown	287
MAYS John Barron			
Growing Up in the City : A Study of Juvenile Delinquency			
Liverpool	1954	Liverpool University Press	288
MENDAY R P and WILES John			
The Everlasting Childhood : The Predicament of the Backward Boy			
London	1959	Gollancz	289
MIDDLETON Nigel			
When Family Failed			
London	1971	Gollancz	290
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION			
Hostels for Difficult Children			
A Survey of Experience under the Evacuation Scheme			
London	1944	HMSO	291
MINISTRY OF HEALTH			
Committee on Social Workers in the Mental Health Services			
London	1951	HMSO	292
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT			
Report on Staffing in Local Government			
London	1967	HMSO	293
MONCKTON Sir Walter			
Report on the Circumstances which led to the Boarding Out of			
Dennis and Terence O'Neill at Bank Farm, Minsterly			
London	1945	HMSO	294
MONSKY Selma F			
Staffing of Local Authority Residential Homes for Children			
London	1964	HMSO Central Office of Information	295
MORDY Isobel			
The Child Wants a Home			
London	1956	Harrop	296
MORRELL Derek H			
The Educational Role of the Approved School			
Cambridge	1968	Cambridge Institute of Criminology	297
MORRISON Herbert			
Government and Parliament : A Survey from the Inside			
London	1960	Oxford University Press	298

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH			
Evidence to the Ingleby Committee on Children and Young Persons			
London	1958	MS British Library Ref 6429m16	299
Why Delinquency? The Case for Operational Research			
London	1949	National Association for Mental Health	300
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE			
Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Residential Work			
London	1967	Allen & Unwin	301
NEILL Alexander Sutherland			
A Radical Approach to Education			
London	1962	Gollancz	302
NICHOLLS Sir George			
A History of the Poor Law - [NB : see also MACKAY Thomas]			
Vol I : 924-1714 and Vol II : 1714-1858 : H G Willink (Ed)			
London	1904	P S King & Son	303
PACKMAN Jean			
The Child's Generation			
Oxford	1975	Basil Blackwell	304
Child Care Needs and Numbers			
London	1968	Allen & Unwin	305
PACKMAN Jean, RANDALL John, JACQUES Nichola			
Who Needs Care?			
Oxford	1986	Basil Blackwell	306
PANEL OF INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH			
OF JASMINE BECKFORD			
Chairman : Blom-Cooper			
Report : A Child in Trust			
London	1985	London Borough of Brent	307
PANETH Marie			
Branch Street : A Sociological Study			
London	1944	Allen & Unwin	308
PARFITT Jessie (Ed)			
The Community's Children			
London	1967	Longmans	309
PARKER Roy A			
Planning for Deprived Children			
London	1972	Epworth Press	310
The Use of Prediction Techniques in Social Work			
London	1967	Nat Institute of Social Work Training	311

Decisions in Child Care : A Study of Prediction in Fostering London	1966	Allen & Unwin	312
PARKHURST PRISON			
Report London	1853	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 1656 Li	313
Report London	1846	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 742 xx	314
Report London	1841	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 314 xviii	315
Report London	1839	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 197 xxii	316
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON POOR HOUSES AND POOR RATES			
Report of the Committee London	1813	Brit Parliamentary Publs : iii 463	317
PARLIAMENTARY PAPER			
White Paper on the Reorganisation of Central Government : Cmnd 4506 London	1970	HMSO	318
PARRIS Henry			
Constitutional Bureaucracy : The Development of British Central Administration since the 18th Century London	1969	Allen & Unwin	319
PAYNE Muriel Amy			
Oliver Untwisted : An Account of a Children's Home London	1929	E Arnold & Co	320
PEARCE John			
Juvenile Delinquency A Short Text Book on the Medical Aspects of Juvenile Delinquency London	1952	Cassell	321
PELLEW Jill			
The Home Office 1848-1914 : From Clerks to Bureaucrats London	1982	Heinemann	322
PERLMAN Helen			
Social Casework : A Problem Solving Process Chicago	1957	Chicago University Press	323
PHILLIPS H and VERNEY E			
War with Crime London	1889	Unknown	324

PHILP A F and TIMMS Noel		
The Problem of the Problem Family		
London	1957 Family Service Unit	325
PICK Pamela		
Children at Tree Tops :		
An Example of Creative Residential Care for Children		
London	1981 The Residential Care Association	326
PINCHBECK Ivy and HEWITT Margaret		
Children in English Society : Vol 2		
18th Century to the Children Act		
London	1973 Routledge & Kegan Paul	327
 POOR LAW		
POOR LAW : COMMISSIONERS FOR ADMINISTERING THE LAWS FOR THE RELIEF		
OF THE POOR IN ENGLAND		
Twenty-Third Annual Report : C 396		
London	1871 Brit Parliamentary Publs : xxvii 1	328
(et seq annually from first report)		
First Annual Report		
London	1849 Brit Parliamentary Publs 1024 xxv 1	329
POOR LAW : COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES		
Fourteenth Annual Report		
London	1848 Brit Parliamentary Publs : 960 xxxiii 1	330
(et seq annually from first report)		
First Annual Report		
London	1835 Brit Parliamentary Publs : 500 xxxc 107	331
POOR LAW : LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD		
Memorandum as to Number of Children maintained under the Poor Law		
London	1913 HMSO	332
Forty-Eighth Annual Report : Cmd 413		
London	1919 Brit Parliamentary Publs : xxiv 379	333
(et seq annually from first report)		
First Annual Report : C 516		
London	1872 Brit Parliamentary Publs : xxviii 1	334
POWER Eileen		
Medieval English Nunneries		
Cambridge	1922 Cambridge University Press	335
PUGH Elizabeth		
Social Work in Child Care		
London	1968 Routledge & Kegan Paul	336

PUGH John				
Life of Hanway				
London	1787	Unknown		337
 RADZINOWICZ L and TURNER J W C				
Detention in Remand Homes				
London	1953	Macmillan		338
 RAYMOND Louise				
Adoption and After				
New York	1955	Harper and Row		339
 RAYNOR L				
Adoption of Non-White Children				
London	1970	Allen & Unwin		340
 RENDEL Leila M				
The Caldecott Community : A Survey of 48 Years from 1911 to 1959				
Mersham:Kent	1965	Caldecott Community		341
 The Child of Misfortune				
Mersham:Kent	1952	Caldecott Community		342
 The Insecure Child				
Mersham:Kent	1943	Caldecott Community		343
 ROBERTSON James				
Young Children in Hospital				
London	1959	Tavistock Publications		344
 A Two-Year-Old goes to Hospital				
London	1953	Tavistock Clinic (Film)		345
 ROBSON William A (Ed)				
Public Enterprise, Developments in Social Ownership etc in Britain				
London	1937	Unknown		346
 RODGERS Barbara and DIXON Julia				
Portrait of Social Work				
Oxford	1960	Oxford University Press		347
 RODGERS Barbara and STEVENSON June				
A New Portrait of Social Work				
Social Services from Younghusband to Seebohm				
London	1973	Heinemann		348
 ROSE G				
Schools for Young Offenders				
London	1967	Tavistock Publications		349

ROSS John and WANSBROUGH-JONES Gwyneth			
Child Migration to Australia			
London	1956	Commonwealth Relations Office	350
ROWE Jane			
Parents, Children and Adoption			
London	1965	Routledge & Kegan Paul	351
Yours by Choice : A Guide for Adoptive Parents			
London	1959	Mills & Boon	352
ROWE Jane and LAMBERT Lydia			
Children who Wait			
London	1973	British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering	353
ROWLANDS Peter			
Children Apart : Problems of Early Separation from Parents			
London	1973	J M Dent & Sons	354
ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND 1966 - 1969			
Chairman : Redcliffe-Maud			
Report : Cmnd 404			
London	1969	HMSO	355
ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ADMINISTRATION AND PRACTICAL OPERATION OF THE LAWS FOR RELIEF OF THE POOR			
Report			
London	1834	Brit Parliamentary Publs : xxvii 1	356
ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE POOR LAWS AND RELIEF OF DISTRESS			
Report : Cd 4499			
London	1909	Brit Parliamentary Publs : xxxvii 1	357
RUSSELL G W E			
One Who Has Kept a Diary : Collections and Recollections			
London	1898	Unknown	358
SAYLES Mary Buell			
The Problem Child at Home			
New York	1932	Commonwealth Fund	359
SCHAFFER H R and SCHAFFER Evelyn B			
Child Care and the Family			
London	1968	G Bell & Sons	360
SCHMIDEBERG Melitta			
Children in Need			
London	1948	Allen & Unwin	361
SCOTTISH HOME DEPARTMENT			
Report of the Committee on Homeless Children : Cmd 6911			
Edinburgh	1954	HMSO	362

SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT			
Social Work and the Community : Cmnd 3065			
Edinburgh	1967	HMSO	363
Report of the Committee on Children & Young Persons (Scotland)			
Cmnd 2306			
Edinburgh	1964	HMSO	364
SCOTTISH OFFICE : ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILD CARE			
Report on Handicapped Children in the Care of Local Authorities and Voluntary Organisations			
Edinburgh	1970	HMSO	365
Report of the Prevention of Neglect in Children : Cmnd 1966			
Edinburgh	1963	HMSO	366
Report on the Staffing of Local Authority Children's Departments			
Edinburgh	1963	HMSO	367
Report of Special Committee on Remand Homes : Cmnd 1588			
Edinburgh	1961	HMSO	368
SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE TREATMENT OF CRIMINAL AND DESTITUTE JUVENILES			
Report			
London	1852	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 515 vii 1	369
SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS ON POOR RELIEF			
Report			
London	1888	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 363 xv 23	370
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES			
Sixth Report : Child Care			
1951		Brit Parliamentary Publs	371
SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT			
Ninth Report			
London	1837	Brit Parliamentary Publs : 174 xviii	372
SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SEVERAL GAOLS AND HOUSES OF CORRECTION IN ENGLAND AND WALES			
Report of the Committee			
London	1835	Brit Parliamentary Publs : xii 1	373
SHAW Otto Leslie			
Prisons of the Mind			
London	1965	Allen & Unwin	374
Maladjusted Boys			
London	1964	Allen & Unwin	375
SINCLAIR Ruth			
Decision Making in Statutory Reviews on Children in Care			
London	1984	Gower	376

The Bridgeburn Days			
London	1956	Gollancz	377
SPARKS R F and HOOD R G			
The Residential Treatment of Disturbed Delinquent Boys			
Cambridge	1968	University of Cambridge	378
STEVENSON Olive			
Someone Else's Child			
London	1965	Routledge & Kegan Paul	379
STOTT Denis Herbert			
Saving Children from Delinquency			
London	1952	London University Press	380
Delinquency and Human Nature			
Dunfermline	1950	Carnegie UK Trust	381
STROUD John			
An Introduction to the Child Care Service			
London	1965	Longmans	382
The Shorn Lamb			
London	1960	Longmans	383
STROUD John (Ed)			
Services for Children and their Families			
London	1973	Pergamon	384
THOMAS Ruth			
Children Without :			
How can they be compensated for the loss of family life?			
London	1946	National Association for Mental Health	385
TIMMS Noel			
Casework in the Child Care Service			
London	1962	Butterworths	386
TITMUS Richard Morris			
Problems of Social Policy			
London	1950	HMSO and Longmans	387
TIZARD Jack, SINCLAIR Ian, CLARKE R V G			
Varieties of Residential Experience			
London	1975	Routledge & Kegan Paul	388
TOD Robert J N (Ed)			
Children in Care			
London	1974	Longmans	389

Social Work in Foster Care : Collected Papers London 1971 Longmans	390
Children in Care : Papers on Residential Work London 1968 Longmans Green	391
Disturbed Children : Papers on Residential Work : Vol 2 London 1968 Longmans	392
TRASLER Gordon Blair	
In Place of Parents : A Study in Foster Care London 1960 Routledge & Kegan Paul	393
TRISELOTIS John	
In Search of Origins : The Experience of Adopted People London 1973 Routledge & Kegan Paul	394
UNITED NATIONS	
The Institutional Care of Children London 1957 HMSO	395
Study on Adoption of Children Geneva 1953 United Nations	396
Biennial Report on Community, Family and Child Welfare 1949-1950 Geneva 1953 United Nations	397
Children Deprived of a Normal Home Life Geneva 1952 HMSO For United Nations	398
UNITED NATIONS : ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL	
Training for Social Work Geneva 1959 United Nations	399
VINCENT B	
Begone Dull Care An Informal Guide to the Residential Care of Children London 1968 HMSO	400
WARHAM Joyce	
An Introduction to Administration for Social Workers London 1966 Routledge & Kegan Paul	401
WATKINS Brian	
Documents on Health and Social Services from 1834 to the Present Day London 1975 Methuen	402

WATSON John A F			
The Child and the Magistrate : 1950 and 1965			
London	1965	Cope	403
WEBB John			
Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich			
Ipswich	1966	Suffolk Records Society : Vol IX	404
WEST Donald James			
Who Becomes Delinquent?			
Second Report of the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development			
London	1973	Heinemann	405
Present Conduct and Future Delinquency			
First Report of the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development			
London	1969	Heinemann	406
The Young Offender			
London	1967	Duckworth	407
WHEELER-BENNETT Sir John			
King George VI : His Life and Reign			
London	1958	Macmillan	408
WILKINS L T			
Delinquent Generations			
London	1960	HMSO	409
WILLCOCK H D			
Report on Juvenile Delinquency (Mass Observation)			
London	1949	Falcon	410
WILLS W David			
A Place like Home : A Hostel for Disturbed Adolescents			
London	1971	HMSO	411
Homer Lane : A Biography			
London	1964	Allen & Unwin	412
Commonsense about Young Offenders			
London	1962	Gollancz	413
Throw Away Thy Rod : Living with Difficult Children			
London	1960	Gollancz	414
The Institution as a Substitute Home			
London	1948	New Era Publications	415
The Barns Experiment			
London	1947	Allen & Unwin	416

WILSON Harriett			
Delinquency and Child Neglect			
London	1964	Allen & Unwin	417
WIMPERIS Virginia			
The Unmarried Mother and her Child			
London	1960	Allen & Unwin	418
WINNICOTT Clare			
Child Care & Social Work			
Papers written between 1954 and 1963			
Hitchin	1964	Codicote Press	419
Casework Techniques in the Child Care Service			
London	1955	Case Conference	420
WOMEN'S GROUP ON PUBLIC WELFARE			
Children Without Homes			
Report of a Conference held on 9 February 1945			
London	1945	National Council of Social Service	421
Our Towns : A Close Up			
Oxford	1945	Oxford University Press	422
WOOTTON Barbara			
Social Science and Social Pathology			
London	1954	Allen & Unwin	423
WORKING PARTY			
Chairman : Longford			
Crime - A Challenge to us all			
London	1964	Labour Party	424
WORKING PARTY			
Chairman : Younghusband			
Social Workers in the Local Authority Health and Welfare Services			
London	1959	HMSO	425
WORKING PARTY			
Chairman : Barclay			
Social Workers : Their Role and Tasks			
London	1982	Bedford Square Press	426
WYMER Norman			
Father of Nobody's Children			
London	1954	Hutchinson & Co	427
YOUNG Leontine			
Out of Wedlock			
A Study of the Problems of the Unmarried Mother and her Child			
London	1956	McGraw Hill	428

YOUNGHUSBAND Eileen

Report of Working Party on Children with Special Needs London	1970	National Children's Bureau	429
Readings in Social Work : Vol 4 : Education for Social Work London	1968	Allen & Unwin	430
Readings in Social Work : Vol 3 : Social Work and Social Values London	1967	Allen & Unwin	431
Readings in Social Work : Vol 2 : New Developments in Casework London	1966	Allen & Unwin	432
Readings in Social Work : Vol 1 : Social Work with Families London	1965	Allen & Unwin	433
Social Work and Social Change National Institute of Social Work Training Series No 1 London	1964	Allen & Unwin	434
Social Work in Britain Supplementary Report on Training and Employment of Social Workers Edinburgh	1951	Constable	435
The Employment and Training of Social Workers Dunfermline	1947	Carnegie UK Trust	436

REFERENCES

a	
b	
c	
d	
e	
f	
g	
h	
i	
j	
k	
l	
m	
n	
o	
p	
q	
r	